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THE
LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
WILBURN WATERS.

The Famous Hunter and Trapper
of White Top Mountain;

EMBRACING

EARLY HISTORY OF SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA

SUFFERINGS OF THE PIONEERS, ETC., ETC.

By CHARLES B. COALE,
FOR THIRTY-THREE YEARS EDITOR OF THE ABINGDON VIRGINIAN.

RICHMOND:
G. W. GARY & CO., STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
1878.



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P R E F A C E .

This book, except that portion of it illustrating the life and adventures of Wilburn Waters, the great hermit hunter and trapper, comprises a series of articles written for a weekly newspaper, partly for pastime, and partly to preserve for the use of the future historian a few facts connected with the early settlement of Southwestern Virginia, and which otherwise might have been lost. These facts, together with attempted descriptions of various localities, and all that the book contains, have the merit at least of being true. Being thus hastily thrown together, without revision or systematic arrangement, the author's only apology is, that it reappears in this form at the urgent solicitation of a great number of persons who read the articles as they appeared in the "Abingdon Virginian," and who thought them worthy of preservation.

With no further apology or explanation, this little volume of "multifarious small things" is thrown into the tide of current literature, not without hope that it may afford a few hours' pleasant pastime at the fireside of the mountaineer, and some of its facts form the nucleus of a much more comprehensive work by an abler pen, embodying the history of our own beautiful Southwestern Virginia.

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WILBURN WATERS.

CHAPTER I.

DESCRIPTION OF WHITE TOP MOUNTAIN, NEAR WHICH, FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, WILBURN WATERS SELECTED THE SPOT FOR HIS CABIN, AND WHERE, EXCEPT AT SHORT INTERVALS, HE HAS EVER SINCE RESIDED.

Before entering upon a narrative of the life and adventures of the remarkable man who is to be the subject of the following pages, it is proper that the writer should give his readers some idea of White Top Mountain, near which, when about twenty years of age, Wilburn Waters selected the spot for his future home.

This is a peak in the Appalachian range, here more familiarly known by the local name of Iron Mountain, and near the point where the three States of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee all unite at a common corner. It is about twenty miles from Abingdon the way the crow flies, though perhaps thirty by the intricate bridle-paths, through intervening mountains, by which it is approached. Until within a few years, comparatively, owing to its inaccessibility, it was almost in its primitive state, and visited only by hunters and trappers, and here and there a "squatter," who may have fled to its fastnesses to evade those penal enactments which a certain class of men

in most communities deem oppressive. It is some 5,000 feet high from base to summit, and upwards of 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. Its summit is a vast field, comprising from 300 to 500 acres, without a tree or shrub, and covered with a luxuriant growth of wild grass, resembling that of our Northwestern prairies, which is highly nutritious, and cropped with insatiable avidity by vast herds of stock, driven there from the neighboring settlements to graze and fatten. During the months of May and June, this field, as well as a large portion of the wooded part of the mountain, is gorgeously carpeted with wild flowers of every imaginable hue, and so fragrant that their perfume is often wafted a considerable distance on the wings of the wind, which sometimes sweeps across the broad field like the dying throes of a hurricane, with fitful shrieks of wild and melancholy music.

Bordering this natural field are great numbers of native gooseberry and currant bushes, which yield their acrid fruits in never-failing abundance, and the wild leopard-lily, springing from its rocky bed, sways to and fro, and scatters its rich perfume as the blast sweeps by. Upon the very summit, various springs of ice-cold water gush from the rocks and leap down the declivities, babbling their wild music as they disappear among magnificent rhododendrons and the dazzling crimson of the Indian pink. These waters are so pure and light that they never oppress, no matter how freely the thirsty visitor may quaff them.

The field above referred to is bordered by a very singular as well as very beautiful growth of timber, known in that region by the name of Lashorn. Some of these trees

grow to an immense height, but generally are not more than from thirty to fifty feet high, and, what is very remarkable, where not crowded they are perfectly flat on top, spreading out to a diameter of from fifteen to thirty feet. It is a species of and very much resembles Norway Spruce, an ornamental tree often found in the yards of our more elegant city residences. The lashorn of White Top is peculiar to that locality, and of the thousands that have been transplanted, not one has ever been known to grow, though some have lived several years. The limbs at the top where they spread out are so tenacious and inflexible, and so closely interlaced, that the writer has seen as many as twenty persons standing and stepping about upon the top of the same tree at the same time. It is very easy to ascend and descend, as the limbs usually begin at the ground, and being cut off about a foot from the trunk, a very convenient "Indian ladder" is formed, and then a hole being cut through the foliage in the centre of the top, it is not difficult for even a lady to ascend and step out upon the vernal platform. Where the forest of this singular and beautiful growth is dense, there is no undergrowth, the trees limbless to the height of forty or fifty feet, the tops intermingling and forming a canopy the sun can scarcely penetrate, and the earth covered with a carpeting of lichen moss, which feels to the tread as soft and elastic as a sponge. During the summer months, these trees are literally alive with snow birds, the little creatures congregating here in millions to build their habitations and rear their young.

Notwithstanding the romantic beauty of this grand ele-

vation, and the exhilarating effects of the highly rarified atmosphere upon the system, hundreds and thousands of people have lived and died within sight of it without ever having paid it a visit. The reason for this has been the difficulty of access, want of accommodations in the vicinity, and the mere cattle-paths by which it is approached through deep and intricate gorges, over steep foot-hills, and through almost impenetrable laurel jungles, sometimes infested by bears, wolves, wild-cats and rattlesnakes. There are but few of these "varmints" there now, except the latter, Wilburn having nearly exterminated them. Rattlesnakes, however, are still abundant, though settlers are rarely bitten.

The view from the summit of White Top is grand beyond description or even conception. Looking toward the south, you have within the scope of vision, stretching away from east to west, the Blue Ridge range, which, in the dim distance, looks like an azure band bordering the horizon, with here and there a tall peak hiding its head in the clouds. To the east, mountain piled upon mountain meets the view, their gentler slopes in places dotted with "clearings," and a column of smoke, here ascending and there laying in long folds along the mountain side, denoting the rude habitation of the ruder "squatter." Looking toward the north, you have the grand old Cumberland range, the barrier that divides the "Dark and Bloody Ground" from the Old Dominion, as if swelling up from an ocean of green, and struggling to lift itself above the vapor that hangs lazily upon its sides. To the west, the view, though less imposing, is not less beautiful. You have before you

the broad Valley of Holston, which, although diversified with hill and dale, bold promontories and pine-clad ridges, still, from the altitude from which you look out upon it, it has the appearance of a vast sea dotted with picturesque islands. In the distance, the spires and tin roofs of the town of Abingdon glisten in the sunlight, large plantations look like blankets spread out in the forest, and at intervals, as it dashes out from behind a bluff, or winds its way through a green pasture, may the White Top Fork of Laurel be seen, like a serpentine thread of silver, its sparkling waters shimmering like diamonds among the foliage and wild-flowers upon its banks.

The writer of this has enjoyed the luxury of many a magnificent scene in his wanderings, but never has seen that from the summit of White Top excelled, or even equaled. He was there on one occasion when a storm came riding on the blast more than a thousand feet below where a company of gentlemen were standing. The whole valley was shrouded as with a pall. The deep-toned thunder bellowed below, preceded by brilliant flashes of lightning, illuminating the dark bosom of the cloud. The scene was awfully grand, and so far transcends the power of mortal description, that he would not dare attempt it.

It was near the base of this mountain, upwards of forty-four years ago, in an obscure "cove," where the rays of the sun are partially shut out by the dense foliage of a grove of giant sugar-maples, that Wilburn Waters, then about twenty years of age, pitched his lonely tent and lighted his first camp-fire. He chose this spot for several reasons—first, because the foot of man rarely polluted the

virgin soil; second, because it was the covert of wild animals in cold and stormy weather; and third, because a bright and bubbling spring of pure cold water leaps from the rocks and dashes off singing its wild lullaby among gorgeous flowers and the songs of birds of strange and brilliant plumage.

Wilburn is one-fourth Indian—what is called a quarteron. For some reason he has never given, except his fondness for solitude and hunting, he sought and settled the obscure spot in which he has resided so many years, and still thinks he would be crowded to suffocation were a family to settle within sight or hearing of him. The writer of this, soon after hearing of the hermit-hunter, now more than twenty-five years ago, found his way into the mountains and sought him out. When he found him, he was eating his morning meal upon a log,—which consisted of corn cake, bear-meat and wild honey, and water from the spring—his two savage bear-dogs meanwhile standing sentinel, awaiting his word for action. We broke bread together, and from that day to this, if the writer has a friend upon whom he could rely in any emergency, that friend is Wilburn Waters, the great hermit-hunter of White Top Mountain.

Although sixty-odd years of age, he is still active and athletic, still devoted to hunting, still unerring in his aim, and was, when I commenced writing these pages in March, 1874, on a wolf hunt in the Alleghanies, which he expected to be the most extensive of his long career in that line, an account of which will probably be included in this little book. Whenever he finds the “sign” of a bear, wolf, or

any other animal, he never loses the trail, although he may have to follow it from mountain to mountain for days together and to great distances, and is almost as sure of his game as if he had it. He is very pious, and will have no intercourse with a swearer or Sabbath-breaker. His motto is, "If a man has neither fear of nor respect for his Maker, he is a dangerous companion for his fellow-man, and should be shunned by all who love the Lord and honor His institutions."

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH, PARENTAGE, NATIVITY AND EARLY ORPHANAGE OF WILBURN WATERS.

Wilburn Waters was born on what is called Ready's river, a branch of the Yadkin, in Wilkes county, North Carolina, on the 20th day of November, 1812. From the best information that can now be had, his father, John P. Waters, was a French Huguenot, who emigrated to America in early life, about the beginning of the present century, and settled in South Carolina. He was a man of some education and liberal acquirements, of strong prejudices and passions, restless, reckless and fond of adventure. Being remarkably stout, fearless and passionate, he was considered dangerous when excited or laboring under a sense of injury, and was supposed by those with whom he communicated most freely, to have been a refugee from South Carolina, if not from France, from some cause he never revealed to others. He settled down, without any apparent calling, among the simple and obscure people on Ready's river, where, after a time, he married his wife, the mother of Wilburn, who was a half-breed Catawba Indian.

From what little history we have of the Catawbas, they were a small portion of the tribe that inhabited Roanoke Island when Lord Raleigh took possession of it about the middle of the sixteenth century, and being dissatisfied with the encroachments and exactions of their new and power-

ful neighbors, they sought a new home among the mountains on the western boundary of the colony, where game was abundant, and the clear, bold streams afforded a plentiful supply of trout and other excellent varieties of fish.

It is not known whether or not there were other Indians there at the time, but they had occupied their quiet retreat but a few years before the whites began to settle near and even among them, and at the time John P. Waters found a home among them they were mostly half-breeds and quarteroons, with very few full-bloods, and the latter the aged members of the community. It is said they originally bore the name of Chowans, but after finding their way into the mountains they took the name of Catawba, the name by which one of the principal streams in that region was known.

Wilburn's mother was one of these people, and was, as before stated, a half-breed. He is, therefore, what is termed a quarteroon. She was said to have been very handsome, tall and straight, with nearly all the characteristics of a full Indian, except that she was unusually amiable in her disposition, and fond of quiet, domestic life. She had some education, was pious and affectionate, and was very anxious that her children should have pious instruction and the best education their limited means and opportunities would allow. She was the mother of five children—four sons and one daughter—of whom Wilburn was the youngest. She died when he was between two and three years old, and the only recollection he has of her is, that she had long, glossy black hair, which she wore loose, and reached nearly to the floor when she stood erect. She died

young, and her death was a terrible blow to her husband, who was warmly-attached to her, and whose turbulent nature she could control with a word. Notwithstanding this attachment, and his apparently unsubdued grief, he soon married another woman, left the community and his children among their relatives, and was never after heard from by his family.

Wilburn's first realization of the loss of his parents, and a circumstance that seems to have been burnt into his memory by bitter tears, was in being carried away on a horse by a stranger, and adopted into a white family several miles away from the little circle he had known as kindred and friends. Of course the children—even the oldest not being able to provide for himself—became separated, and in the providence of God were never re-united as one family again.

Soon after his father's second marriage and disappearance from the neighborhood, Wilburn, then about three years old, was taken to the house of Mr. Frank Flournoy, on Ready's river, in Wilkes county, where he remained between two and three years. Here, when between four and five years old, he gave the first evidence of his natural fondness for daring and adventure. Following some ladies out one Sunday afternoon to the bank of the river, where there was a shelving rock reaching down into the water at a very deep and rapid place in the stream, he was greatly interested in seeing them each in turn slide down the face of the rock as near to the edge of the water as possible without getting in, and where the rock was so steep they could not get back without help. Refusing to permit him

to try the experiment, he determined to dodge them on their return to the house, go back to the stream, and see if he couldn't get farther down on the rock than any of them had gone and get back without aid. He carried out his plans, let himself down the steep face of the rock to the very edge of the water by inserting his fingers in the crevices, and then discovered that it was impossible to get back. Young as he was, he took in the situation at a moment, and governed himself accordingly. Still clinging to the rock, with his hold weakening every moment, and being aware that he was bound to drop in, he noticed which way the current ran, and that some willows just below the rock shot out their roots on the bottom of the stream, he determined to let all holds go, drop to the bottom, and then make his way as fast as possible on all-fours to the roots and work himself out. His plan succeeded, and he returned to the house perfectly elated that he had performed a feat that none of the young ladies had accomplished.

After remaining with Mr. Flournoy till he was nearly five years old, he was apprenticed to a saddler by the name of John Ernest, high upon the Yadkin, where he found his first bee-tree, cut it down and got a gallon of honey. Here, too, he got his first whipping for taking a whole day to go an errand not requiring more than half an hour. Knowing that he deserved it, he submitted to the chastisement without complaint, though it was very mortifying to his pride, and made him wonder why it was that one person should have the right to punish another.

At the expiration of the first year, Ernest sold his time

to Nelson Alloway, sheriff of Wilkes county, for \$30. Here he remained eleven years, or till he was about seventeen years old. When about twelve, he had his first adventure with a bear—a pet, chained to a stake. It was at the house of a neighbor, and he went to it when no one was about, and was feeding it chinquapins. While engaged in this, the bear became very friendly, and laid one paw upon his shoulder. Feeling complimented by this manifestation of so much affection, he kept feeding the animal, which became still more affectionate by placing the other forepaw on his other shoulder. This, he thought, was remarkably kind, but in a moment he was brought to a sense of his danger by the bear clapping both of its hind feet upon his knees. He now found himself in bruin's power, and saw in a moment that there was but one way of escape from a hug that didn't exactly comport with his sense of propriety. He formed his plan in a moment, which was to slowly and carelessly recede till the chain became tight, and then to spring off suddenly, tearing himself loose. He did so, leaving part of his clothing in possession of the bear, which became terribly enraged at his escape.

About this time he had his first adventures with a deer, a copper-head snake and a mad dog. Being on the river bank one morning, he saw a deer that had been run down by dogs lying in the bushes near the edge of the stream. Seeing that it was not disposed to move at his approach, he took a cord from his pocket and tied it around one of its hind legs, when the deer gave a sudden flirt, and striking Wilburn with both hind feet, plunged him into the middle of the stream, nearly stripping his clothes from

his body and lacerating his person. He then called up a dog and caught and killed the animal, as much safer and quicker than attempting to lead it home with a cord.

Being bitten on the ankle by a copper-head, he was disabled six weeks, and was only relieved by the application of a chicken cut open and the warm insides applied to the wound, which he still regards as a sovereign remedy.

During this year, or when he was about thirteen, he was out in the field one day, and saw a strange dog passing near him, which he called and tried to coax to him. The dog passed on without noticing him, and bit a horse and a hog near by. In a little while several men passed along in pursuit, and informed him that the dog was mad. He considered his escape a special providence.

He became excessively fond of rabbit-hunting and fishing, and followed one or the other pursuit nearly every Sabbath. He had but little respect for religion at that time, as the family he lived with were very strict on Sunday and very profane through the week. Seeing a very large yellow-jackets' nest, a man told him he could easily whip it out, as they couldn't sting in that time of the moon. He undertook the job and soon found his pants and hair full of the little torments, and didn't get rid of them till he ran to the river and dived. He has never since had much faith in moon signs.

Wilburn had a great many little adventures while in his early teens, showing his recklessness and presence of mind in extricating himself. For instance, he several times became lost in the mountains, but discovered by experience that by taking the opposite direction to that he

believed to be, or rather seemed to be right, he always found himself without difficulty. When about fifteen, he offered up his first prayer. He had climbed a very large blackoak after squirrels. Getting some ten feet above the first limb, which was sixty or seventy feet from the ground, he found it very difficult and dangerous to get back. He fastened his fingers in the bark, but could get no purchase for his legs or feet. He then held on with his hands and prayed to the Lord for assistance. Then, making another effort, his legs took hold and he got down safely. He is still satisfied the Lord heard his prayer and relieved him.

CHAPTER III.

THE INDIAN NATURE DEVELOPED—LYING OUT THREE MONTHS—
FIRST SCHOOLING—HIS GREAT STRENGTH AND ACTIVITY.

Wilburn, now in his seventeenth year, begins to show the spirit of retaliation and vindictiveness of the Indian. Mr. Alloway having chastised him for some trivial offence, with the promise of repeating it the following morning, he sharpened his tomahawk and knife and ran fifteen miles to a mountain, near where his oldest brother lived, where he laid out three months, sometimes coming down to his brother's cabin in the night. His brother begged him to return and finish out his time, and Mr. Alloway proclaimed so that he got to hear it, that if he would return and stay till he was of age he would give him twelve months' schooling, and a horse, saddle and bridle. He would listen to no proposition, but when he heard that Alloway was hunting for him, and sometimes saw him from his mountain perch riding among the settlers in search of him, he determined that he would never be taken alive, and that he would kill any one who attempted to arrest him.

After spending three months in the mountain, he left there, and went to live with a man by the name of John Cox, in Ashe, now Alleghany county. Here he remained only about a year, the Indian propensity at retaliation making it necessary for him to change quarters. He set some traps near the barn, and caught a number of part-

ridges one afternoon. As Mr. Cox, who was absent, was very fond of birds, Wilburn put four of them away to save for him. In the morning they had disappeared, and some one of the family having told a hired woman that Wilburn accused her of eating them, which he disclaimed, she flew into a violent rage, and declared that he should catch no more birds, as she would go right straight and destroy his traps. She started to do so, and as the traps were within view from an upper window in the room where the woman slept, and where she had a bran new feather-bed of her own, he went up there to watch her motions. There were four traps, and as she approached the first she destroyed it, As soon as he saw this, he deliberately took out his knife and split the tick of her own bed half-way along. She then demolished a second trap, and he finished that side of the tick with his knife. As the third trap was scattered, half the other side of the tick had a slit in it, and as the fourth and last trap shared the fate of the others, the last slit was made in the tick and the bed was in two pieces.

Having finished the traps, she returned to the house still mad with passion, and said to Wilburn: "Now go and fix up your traps if you want them." "All right," said he, "and if you want to sleep on your new bed to-night, you had better go up to your room and fix it." Suspecting something wrong from his countenance and manner, she ran upstairs and found the feathers all over the floor and the tick in two pieces. This made the house too hot for him, and he had to leave. Having had no education or good counsel up to this time, he felt his great need of both, and determined to go to his oldest brother, William P. Waters,

for advice and direction, who was keeping a school at a place called Whiteoak Grove, in Wilkes. He carried out his determination, was kindly received by his brother, taken into the school, where he continued six months, paying his board at a neighboring house by working nights and mornings and Saturdays. While going to school he cut down and split up two very large hickory trees for a flax and cotton shirt.

When the school term was out he hired himself to a man by the name of Hanks, on Elkin, in Wilkes, at twenty-five cents per day. One afternoon Hanks and another man proposed to go to a deep hole in the creek to bathe, and invited Wilburn to go with them for the purpose of having some sport at his expense. He discovered this from their talk and manœuvres, and determined to keep even with them if he could. They were under the impression that he couldn't swim, and intended to amuse themselves with him in deep water. When the other man got in the water Hanks ordered Wilburn to strip off and jump in, telling him the man in the water would not let him drown, but would learn him to swim. Pretending to be willing to comply, he prepared himself, and just as Hanks approached to push him off the bank into the water, he suddenly caught him (Hanks) by the ankles and tossed him over his head backward into the middle of the stream, with his hat, boots and all his clothes on. Wilburn then quietly dressed himself and walked back to the house, Hanks taking it all in good part, or at least saying nothing about it.

Hanks was himself a laborer, and a very poor man, and hired Wilburn, as the latter discovered, at twenty-five

cents per day for the purpose of hiring him out at fifty, thus making a quarter clear per diem. So the next day after the adventure in the creek, Hanks and Wilburn went to work for Thomas Bryant in the same neighborhood, where Hanks was to receive a dollar per day for the two. Mr. Bryant, thinking this not exactly fair, said to Wilburn: "Why work for Hanks, he will never pay you anything, but come and work for me and I will pay you something." This suited Wilburn's views of things, so he quit Hanks and went to live with Bryant, particularly, as he said, they lived light at the house of Hanks, while there was always plenty at the house of Bryant, and he was fond of good living. He remained with Mr. Bryant two years, was kindly treated, had wholesome moral instruction, and was promptly and liberally paid for his labor.

Shortly after going there to live, there was a corn-shuck-ing and quilting at Mr. Bryant's, which drew together a large number of the men and women of the neighborhood. After the men had come to the house, Mr. Bryant directed Wilburn to chop and carry in some wood. He chopped it, and was about to carry in a log first to put on behind, when one of the men sat down on it. Wilburn asked him to get up as they were in a hurry in the house for a fire, when the man rose and demanded a scuffle. Wilburn, Indian-like, had no disposition for that sort of amusement, and took it in solid earnest. Finding the man disposed to keep it up, he drew back and knocked him some twelve or fifteen feet, the man turning some two or three somersaults before he stopped. This exasperated the men, and they determined to so annoy him after supper as to make

him understand a joke. Accordingly they got out into the yard and commenced playing with each other in such a rough way as to induce Wilburn, in the simplicity of his nature, to imagine that they were fighting. The plan succeeded, and when he got among them first one and then another would thump him in the back. By this time he discovered that instead of fighting each other they were fighting him, as he thought, and concluded that it was about time to go to work in self-defence, and in less than a minute he knocked several of them down, hurting one or two quite badly. This was the second time he had developed the Indian, and he informed the writer that it was on that occasion he discovered for the first time his great strength and activity, though then under eighteen years of age.

Sometime after this, or before he was nineteen, he went to live with Rev. Morgan Bryant, brother of Thomas, in Ashe county, North Carolina. Here commenced his career as a hunter of the larger game, a narrative of his exploits and wonderful adventures in which will be commenced in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

HIS FIRST WOLF-HUNTING.

When Wilburn commenced shooting with a rifle he was very awkward and unsuccessful, missing about as often as he hit. Perseverance and a determination to excel, however, soon made him very expert, and it was not a great while before he could hit an object the size of the bullet that fitted his gun as far as he could see it, and he can do so yet although sixty-five years of age, always taking sight with both eyes wide open. The secret of his great success in hunting has been his wonderful eye-sight, instinct in following a trail, and the cat-like stealthiness with which he can approach his game.

Soon after going to live with Morgan Bryant, he commenced his career in the woods by hunting wild turkeys, at which he was very successful, and rarely failed to secure one or more where the most experienced hunters in that region failed to find them. When hunting in company with others, he would nearly always get as many as all the rest together. He soon became noted as a turkey-hunter, and had no rival in the mountains of Ashe.

We now, after leaving out many adventures with deer, catamounts, &c., come to his first wolf-hunt, or rather his first wolf-trapping. Mr. Bryant himself, as well as several of his neighbors, were old and experienced wolf-hunters, but notwithstanding this there was an old male wolf in

the settlement that had been living on the stock of the farmers for several years, and every plan they had devised to capture him had failed. Early one morning, Mr. Bryant, in crossing a mountain where there was an old wagon-road, found six of his sheep that had been slaughtered the previous night by this old enemy. He at once returned to the house and directed Wilburn to take the ox-cart up and bring the dead sheep down and skin them. Wilburn, with his innate love of adventure asserting itself, proposed that if he would let him have the dead sheep for bait he would catch the wolf. Mr. Bryant ridiculed the idea, that he, a young and inexperienced boy, who had never even seen a wolf, and had no knowledge of the habits of the cunning animal, should undertake to capture him, when the most experienced and daring hunters in that mountain range had failed and long since given up the job as hopeless. Wilburn, however, confident of his ability to circumvent and capture the old depredator, that now prowled about with impunity, was so importunate that Mr. Bryant finally consented that he might use the sheep for that purpose, and also to use one of his traps. So he yoked up the oxen at once and started, and before night he had the dead sheep hauled to a convenient place, quartered them, and placed the pieces down the side of the mountain toward a small stream that was spanned by a fallen tree, which his Indian instinct doubtless led him to believe would be a good place for wolves to cross. He carried the last quarter across this log, and suspended it under the log and above the surface of the water with a hickory withe; then, by removing the stones and moss immediately under it in

the stream, he scraped out a place in the sand and fitted his trap in it, and then nicely covered it with the sand and moss, and left it to take its chance.

Being impatient, and almost absolutely certain that he would catch the wolf, he returned in a day or two, but none of the bait had been disturbed. In a few more days he returned again, and found all the bait gone except the piece suspended over the trap. He was now pretty sure of his game the next morning, and on returning found the bait undisturbed, but the trap was gone. (For the information of those who are unacquainted with the manner of trapping for wolves, it may not be amiss to state that a large steel-trap is used, with a chain attached four or five feet long, with a triple hook or grapnel at the end. The trap is never made fast to any thing stationary, as the wolf, if he cannot get away with it, will gnaw off his limb and escape. Nor is a trap ever baited, but carefully concealed in a place where it is supposed a wolf will travel. Hence Wilburn concealed his exactly where he knew the wolf would place his feet if he attempted to get the bait suspended from the log.)

As before said, when Wilburn approached the bait he saw at a glance the trap was gone, and on casting his eye to the ground he saw the trail very plainly, and followed it to a laurel thicket about fifty yards off. On parting the bushes with his hands, there stood the first wolf he had ever seen within a few feet of him, with one leg in the trap, and the grapnel fast in a root. As he was an exceedingly large animal, Wilburn determined to take him home alive, and for this purpose made a noose in a cord he had

with him, slipped it over the mouth of the wolf, then tied his feet all together, and slung him around his shoulders like a powder-horn. Finding him too heavy to carry, however, he cut his throat, took off the hide and carried that home, which was sufficient evidence that he had captured a wolf that all the most noted hunters in that region had long since given up to depredate with impunity.

This first success gave him notoriety among the settlers, and in a few weeks he was sent for from a distant neighborhood to go over and trap for an old female wolf—perhaps the mate of the one he had captured—that had been killing sheep for two or three years, and could not be caught by the most experienced trappers. Having borrowed the same trap, he soon appeared on the scene of action. On inquiry, he found that the old animal had been in the neighboring mountains several years, and had become so wary and cunning that all attempts at capturing her had proved abortive. Wilburn at once made his way to a certain range where her lair was supposed to be, and it was not long before he discovered signs of her whereabouts and her line of travel towards the settlement where she procured her rations. This was very plain to him in a piece of marshy ground on the mountain side, near an obscure cattle path, where crawfish had erected those peculiar chimney-like structures which we frequently see in marshy places. His instinct for trailing where none but an Indian can discern a track, soon revealed to him that the wary old animal avoided the path where so many traps had been set for her, and invariably placed her feet upon one or more of these crawfish chimneys, as if conscious

there could be no traps concealed beneath them. Seeing that she had passed that way a night or two before, leaving one of these little towers standing, and naturally supposing she would put her foot upon it the next time she passed that way, he carefully removed it, scooped out a place for his traps where it stood, fitted it in nicely, concealed it with leaves, and placed the crawfish structure upon the trap, looking precisely as it did before he moved it, and left the trap to take its chance.

In a day or two after he returned and found that the wolf had been in his trap and left two of her toes, which he put in his pocket. Knowing that she would not go far with her crippled feet, he went out into the settlement and got about a dozen men and as many dogs to run her down, telling the men that she had been in his trap, and that he knew exactly where to start her, without informing them that she had left her toes. Next morning they were all on the ground at an early hour, and started the wolf within fifty yards of where the trap had been set. The men being stationed at various "stands" in the range, she found it difficult to get out, and doubled from point to point with the dogs on her trail, till late in the afternoon, when she was forced to seek and take shelter in her cavern. At this time all the men except two had given up the chase and returned to their homes, and only two dogs remained, belonging to the two men who held out. Wilburn himself was so close upon the wolf when she entered the den that he saw her, and the two dogs were right at her heels. He called up his two companions, and told them to make their dogs go in and bring her out. They entered several times,

but were as often whipped out, torn and bleeding. Growing impatient, Wilburn at last took off his coat and crawled into the cavern snake-fashion. After proceeding thus some distance, he saw her eyes shining like two balls of fire in the back part of the den, brought his gun, which he had pushed along before him, to bear, and fired. Not seeing her eyes after this, he worked himself out and sent the dogs in again, when they soon returned dragging the dead wolf after them.

As the scalp was worth \$20, both the men, affecting to believe that it was not the wolf that had been in the trap, and each claiming that his dog "holed" her, and that Wilburn, therefore, had no claim to her. "Well," said he, "I can settle the dispute in a minute," drawing the two toes from his pocket. "Here," said he, "take those toes and examine her feet, and if you find they will fit one of them, she belongs to me, if not she belongs to you between you." This was sufficient evidence that the wolf had been in the trap, and Wilburn, after a little plain talk to them about their meanness, took off the skin and made his way home with it. This gave him the reputation of being the most daring and successful trapper in all that mountain region, and made him an envied as well as honored character among hunters and trappers.

CHAPTER V.

ADVENTURE WITH A WOUNDED BUCK.

About the time of Wilburn's first experience with wolves, as related in the preceding chapter, he had his first adventure with a wounded and exasperated buck, which he regards as the most dangerous animal to approach in our forests, when wounded or at bay.

He had gone out to a "lick" a little before night to watch for deer. These licks, or low marshy places, where there are deposits of sulphur, salt, &c., and which deer love to frequent, are very numerous in all this mountain region. He had gone to one of these, which he knew deer were in the habit of visiting almost every night. He had just climbed a tree to be out of sight, and just about dusk up marched two bucks, one of them very large, with a magnificent head of horns. After cautiously snuffing the air as if apprehensive of a hidden enemy, and failing to wind him, they walked boldly into the lick. Failing to get them in range so as to kill both at the same fire, he selected the larger of the two, brought his rifle to bear and fired. Both sprang off at the crack of the gun, but he saw from the motions of the one that he shot at, that it was badly if not fatally wounded. He came down from the tree, followed the trail a few yards, and there lay his buck apparently lifeless. As he approached it, it sprang to its feet in a moment and came at him with the ferocity

of a tiger. There was no escape from a terrible struggle for life, and he knew that his only chance was in his extraordinary strength and activity, as well as coolness and presence of mind. He had scarcely had time to think even this much, when the buck rushed upon and attempted to impale him. He grabbed him by the horns and threw him several times, but the active animal was on his feet again in an instant, and so the struggle continued several minutes—to Wilburn it seemed hours—sometimes one on top and then the other, but Wilburn's great strength enabled him to keep his hold, although his clothes were badly torn and his person considerably lacerated by the sharp hoofs of the animal, which cut with the keenness of a knife. Whilst thus struggling, he at length found time to get his knife out of his pocket and open it with his teeth. He made a desperate lunge and supposed he had entirely severed its windpipe, but it made another effort for freedom, kicked him loose and plunged into the undergrowth. He followed it a short distance and found it dead with its head nearly severed from its body.

Although Wilburn has many times since been in very close places, and had many hand-to-hand fights with both bears and wolves, he thinks he never has been as near whipped out and in as much danger of losing his life, as he was in that encounter with a maddened four-pronged buck.

Being now about nineteen, and having but very little learning, he determined to return to the neighborhood of Thomas Bryant, where he had lived the year before, and go to school. He continued in the school about ten months,

and had learned to read, write and cypher a little. The wolves becoming very destructive about this time, it was proclaimed in the neighborhood that the counties of Ashe, North Carolina, and Grayson, Virginia, had offered handsome premiums for wolf-scalps, he at once determined to embark in the business, for the sake of both pleasure and profit. He was boarding at this time with a man by the name of Wyatt, whose daughter was the wife of Andrew Blevins, and they lived at White Top. Blevins and his wife being then on a visit at Wyatt's, and White Top being within the prescribed limits of the premium for scalps, Wilburn asked Blevins if his was a good region for wolves. On being informed that any number "used in those parts," as well as bears and all sorts of wild animals, he at once determined to go there and try his luck, and accordingly gathered up his gun and traps, and was soon at his future home.

But here we must go back a little, and bring up the history of Wilburn's religious convictions, experience and conversion, which will doubtless be dry and uninteresting to some, who can, if they choose to do so, skip the balance of this chapter. His religious convictions commenced while at school, under the preaching of Rev. George Douglass, a Baptist minister. As he expressed it, he felt very wretched, but could not tell why, and tried all manner of ways to suppress his feelings. He then returned to Morgan Bryant's, where there was regular circuit preaching by the Rev. George Baker. He determined to attend preaching regularly, give way to his feelings and see what it would result in. On one occasion he felt as if he were

suffocating, that the house was too small for him, that he was too near the preacher, a cold chill ran through his system, and he thought he was about to die. As soon as preaching was over, he started to a very dense thicket he knew of in the woods, where no one could see him, for the purpose of praying. When he reached it, it was not half as dense as he had supposed, and he was very much afraid somebody would see him. However, after peering all around and satisfying himself that no one saw him, he knelt down and prayed. He arose with his mind still unsatisfied and desponding, and again tried to stifle his convictions, but the more he tried the more wretched he felt. On Sundays he would take his Bible and go out into some obscure and dark hollow in the forest to read and pray, but the doctrine of decrees that he had sometimes heard confused and perplexed him, and then again he would seem to hear as if in an audible voice the words "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

He continued in this frame of mind several months, often exhorting others to forsake their sins, although still unconverted himself. It was at this time that he met with Andrew Blevins, and the impression that White Top would be a favorable place, on account of its solitude, to find religion as well as game, induced him to determine to make its fastnesses his future home. Although after getting there he lived in a family who had no regard for the Sabbath and sacred things, he continued to read his Bible and pray, and had an idea that religion would be revealed to him in an audible voice or some other equally miraculous way. Finding his own efforts of no avail, he at last

made a full surrender, and came to the conclusion that he would cast himself unreservedly and helplessly upon the great and abounding mercy of the Lord, who had promised to save all who called upon Him in sincerity, truth and faith. This he determined to do, if he died and perished in the attempt. He then retired to his garret and prayed the livelong night, and early in the morning he felt as if he had dropped a heavy weight, and was inexpressibly happy. The skies looked brighter, the trees greener, the sun shone with a glory he had never seen before, the birds sang more sweetly, the flowers were surpassingly fragrant and beautiful, everybody he saw looked better than they had ever looked before, the very woods and mountains seemed to clap their hands with joy, and everything appeared to be praising the Lord. A great burden had been lifted from his heart, and he felt as if he could fly away as on the wings of an eagle and enjoy the full fruition of the saints in light. He then for the first time comprehended, with inexpressible delight, that Scripture which says "The wind bloweth where it listeth: thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth," &c.

From that day to this—more than forty-four years—he has never faltered or doubted, though, like all others, he has had his seasons of depression and refreshing. He found peace in the fall of the year, though he made no public profession during the following winter, nor unite himself with a church; he did not suppress or try to conceal his feelings, but rebuked sin wherever he saw it, and exhorted sinners to forsake their evil ways. As he was

among Baptists principally, they had some influence with him, but his feelings revolted at close communion and the doctrine of no falling from grace. In the spring he put up a rude shelter where has ever since resided, and although entirely alone, he held what he called family prayer every morning and night. Soon after this a family came to stay with him awhile, and it was a great cross to him to pray in their presence, but he determined to pick up the cross and carry it, which was far better than to drag it along, and continued to keep the flame alive on the altar.

During the summer he heard of a two days' meeting that was to be held at the house of Isaac Widner, in Widner Valley, twelve miles from his cabin, and determined to attend. He did so when the time arrived, where he met for the first time Mr. John Wesley Price, a very pious gentleman, who talked to him a great deal, and seemed to take unusual interest in his spiritual welfare. There was to be a love-feast meeting during the day, and Mr. Price insisted that he should attend it and relate his experience. He at first refused, believing that he could not possibly speak before so many people, but finally determined to try as a matter of duty. When the time came, he felt as if a great weight held him down to his seat. Several had spoken, and, thinking that his turn had come, he made a desperate effort to rise, sprang clear from the floor, spoke the best he could, in a very stammering way, and became exceedingly happy. There was to be a secret prayer-meeting that evening, and fearing that he might be called on to pray, he tried to make an excuse to be absent; but Mr. Price prevented him, and he was the first one called upon.

He complied in a very feeble manner, but he thought of the Publican's petition and took encouragement, remarking to a friend that it was no wonder Jonah was willing to be swallowed by a whale rather than go to Nineveh and preach.

Liking the Methodist doctrine and manner of worship best, he united with that church, and from that day to this, "through evil as well as good report," he has maintained his religious integrity, performing his Christian duties and obligations with an earnestness and zeal manifested by few, and even since he has been an old man he will walk miles through the mountains to attend religious worship. A few years ago he was appointed Superintendent of a Sabbath-school in a neighborhood eight miles from his residence, and he never failed to be present, no matter how inclement the weather.

While on the subject of Wilburn's religious characteristics and experiences, the next chapter will narrate some of his peculiarities of thought and action at a camp-meeting not many years ago.

CHAPTER VI.

EXPERIENCE AT A CAMP-MEETING WITH A NEW HAT.

In 1858 or 9 the Holston Conference held its annual session in Abingdon, and the writer of these pages knowing that Wilburn had never attended the deliberations of such a body, and believing he would enjoy both the proceedings and the ministrations of the occasion, prevailed upon him to come out of his retreat, although he was averse to visiting towns and had not been in Abingdon for many years. He came, attended the sessions regularly and punctually, was at preaching every day and night, but failed to manifest as much interest as it was supposed he would. Bishop Early, who presided over the deliberations of the body, became acquainted with and very much interested in him, and talked a great deal with him about his wild and solitary life, as well as about his religious joys and sorrows. One evening near the close of the term of conference, during the entire session of which the devotional exercises had been of that dignified and quiet character not always suited to the tastes of persons of impulsive and excitable temperament, and to Wilburn rather lifeless and formal, the Bishop asked him what he thought of the ministrations and other exercises of the occasion.

"Well, Bishop," said he, "I will answer your question by giving you a bit of history in my own religious experience. About three years ago I heard of a camp-meeting

in Ashe county, North Carolina, some twenty-five or thirty miles from my cabin, and on Friday night I made up my mind to go, fixed up my plunder, greased my boots, and started in that direction very early on Saturday morning. On the way I had to pass a store, and as the hat I had on was rather shabby, I concluded to stop in and buy a new one, as much to honor the Lord as to look more respectable myself. I bought one that suited me, paid pretty high for it, put it on, left the old one and my gun at the store till I should return, and arrived at the camp-ground early in the afternoon. When I arrived, a minister was in the stand preaching a cold and inanimate sermon—one, as I thought, without unction or spirituality in it—and I quietly took a seat as near the altar as I could get, putting my new hat under my seat for safety. Just as I was about to raise my heart in prayer, I heard some one's feet shuffling under my seat, and I knew my hat was in danger. This cut my prayer short, and I moved the hat and sat it on the ground beside me and went to praying again, but just then a man behind me spirted a mouthful of ambler all round it, and I began to think it would be ruined in spite of all I could do if I didn't keep it on my head, which I couldn't well do in the congregation. I moved it to the other side, where another man seemed to have a like grudge at it, and I took it into my lap. The fear that I would mash it drove prayer out of my mind, and I looked all round for a limb or something to hang it on out of the way of feet and tobacco-juice, but could see nothing. The minister preached on, and I again tried to pray, but that hat was in my way and filled my mind, and my prayers seemed to

stick fast in my throat. The sermon seemed to me as cold as a snow-drift, and the meeting as lifeless and formal as a Quaker funeral. When I tried to be devotional, something would whisper in my ear, 'You had better take care of that hat, or you will get it mashed as flat as a batter-cake.' At length the long, dry sermon closed, sunset came, and some one proposed, as the Lord had not poured out His spirit upon us, perhaps he would, if we would all, with one heart and one mind, go out into the silence of the forest and supplicate Him. We went, I with my new hat in my hand, fearful all the time that it would get mashed in the crowd or injured in some way. We prayed and sung, and sung and prayed, but our prayers didn't seem to rise higher than our heads, and our songs higher than the tree-tops. At last a good old father in Israel said: 'Well, brethren, there must be an Achan in the camp, the Lord refuses to bless us, and we might as well return to our tents.'

"I stood musing a few minutes, not knowing what to do, with my hat still in my hand for fear it would get injured, when I heard a man utter a deep and bitter groan. Looking around, I saw that all had left except that man and myself, and he seemed to be in great agony. I asked him what was the matter, when he replied that he was a great sinner, and he didn't believe the Lord would pardon him. 'Yes He will,' said I, 'if you call upon Him as you should with your whole heart and soul, without depending upon anything you can do yourself.' He said he had prayed, but it didn't seem to do any good, and asked me if I wouldn't pray for him. I told him yes, bless God I

would, laid my hat carefully away in a clump of bushes where I thought nothing could get at it, and to praying I went with all my might, soul and spirit. How long I prayed I don't know, but when I came to myself the stars were all out, the whole congregation had returned, the despairing man was shouting and praising the Lord, all the believers were happy and clapping their hands with joy, and for the first time after the man asked me to pray for him I thought of my new hat, and it was *gone*. I looked for the clump of bushes, but they had been ~~trampled~~ trampled down by the great crowd, but finally seeing something black in the dust where the congregation had been shouting and shaking hands, I picked it up and shook it into some sort of shape, and it was that new hat of which I had been so careful, and which had occupied all my thoughts. Forgetting it, my heart went out to the Lord. He heard my supplications, the unhappy man was converted, the son of Jesse came into the great congregation, the cry of 'what shall I do to be saved?' rang out on the night air like the noise of many waters, and there was joy and gladness in the encampment.

"And now, Bishop," said he, "there is a moral to this story, and it is this—*there are too many new hats in this conference.*"

CHAPTER VII.

IN A CLOSE PLACE WITH A LARGE WOUNDED BEAR.

As stated in a preceding chapter, Wilburn made his first appearance at White Top in the fall of 1832, when he was about 20 years of age. Being but little mast that season, there was of course but little game, and he did but little successful hunting, not being yet prepared for wolf-trapping. While roaming through the mountains, however, he came across the place where he subsequently pitched his tent. As related in the first chapter, he selected it because it was in a rich, obscure cove, some distance from the nearest settlement, and was the common refuge of wild animals in cold and stormy weather. In addition to this, it was central among the surrounding mountains, and a spring of clear, cold water gushed from the rocks within a few feet of the site of his future cabin. The land being vacant, he entered 640 acres in the spring, and pitched his tent. This was a rude concern, such as we sometimes see at a coal-pit, with one end open. This was his habitation for four years, where he lay at night with his feet to the fire on the outside, often lulled to rest after a hard day's hunt, by the howls of wolves and the screams of catamounts, which would prowl around but were too much afraid of the fire to approach very closely.

During the first summer and fall after going to *house-keeping* in this way, he killed a large number of wild

turkeys and deer, six bears and several wolves and catamounts, though he had no daring or dangerous adventures. The first wild bear he ever saw was during the fall, while out stalking deer, but a mile or two from his cabin. It was standing on a log about sixty yards from and looking straight at him. Having heard that a bear was a very hard animal to kill, and unless struck in a vital place was a very dangerous adversary, he determined to shoot it in the mouth or eye. As the former was the largest target, he concluded to aim at that, and if he should fail to inflict a fatal wound, and it should make fight, he would meet it fair and square with his tomahawk. He drew a bead and fired, when the bear sprang from the log to the ground and died in a few minutes. On examining it, he found the ball had split his nose, passed through the lower part of his mouth, through the heart, and traversing the whole length of the body from end to end.

Sometime after this, having killed a number in the meantime, he had his first dangerous encounter with a very large wounded and ferocious bear. He had been following the trail on Pond mountain all day through a deep snow, and as the snow was still falling at nightfall, he determined to remain where he was till morning, instead of returning to his cabin several miles off, as the track might be filled up before he could return. Thus deciding he scraped away the snow at the root of a large tree, started up a fire with the dryest sticks he could find, and laid down supperless to rest.

As soon as the snow on the surrounding peaks began to glisten in the rays of the rising sun, he arose, shook the

flakes from his locks, and started out with his rifle to find the tracks of the bear. The snow that had fallen through the night had entirely obliterated the trail, but he had gone but a short distance till he saw the tracks of a 'coon that had passed along so short a time before that the trail was still plain. Feeling that a little fresh meat—and especially 'coon meat, second only to that of bear with a hunter—would be very acceptable for the breakfast of a man who had no supper the night before, he followed on a hundred paces or more, when his attention was arrested by what seemed to be a bear-skin rolled up and lying on the snow, some thirty or forty paces in front of him. While standing and looking at it intently, and wondering how it had gotten there, or who could have killed and skinned a bear so near his habitation without his knowledge, he noticed it gently rising and falling like an animal breathing. Scrutinizing it closely, and being satisfied that it had life in it, the difficulty with him was, whether it was a fullgrown bear partially covered by the snow or a cub lying on the surface. If it should be the former, it would be a dangerous experiment to shoot at it without a vital part visible for a mark, and if the latter, a ball would kill it, hit where it might. He revolved the matter in his mind some minutes, watching it closely all the time, and finally concluded that it was nothing but a cub, and, to use his own language, he “shot at the pile.” At the crack of the rifle, the identical bear he had followed all the day before rose from his bed, the snow surging and whirling as if it had been stirred by a hurricane into a column of fog, and fixing his glaring eyes upon his assailant, gave unmistakable

evidence of a furious attack. Wilburn was well enough acquainted with the disposition of a wounded bear to comprehend the situation in an instant, and as the animal started towards him he knew there was but slight hope of escape from a square fist-and-skull fight with a very large, wounded and exasperated bear. He had but a moment to think, but in that moment he remembered that his gun was empty and that he had left his tomahawk at the place where he had slept. There was, therefore, but one possible chance of escape, and that was to spring as high as he could at a single bound up a beech sapling by which he was standing, and remain as motionless as he could, and this must be done while the bear would lose sight of him for a second in passing round a large tree between them. Wilburn made the spring at the very instant the tree was between them, holding to a limb above him with one hand, holding his gun with the other, and his feet meantime drawn as high up as he could get them, some three or four feet above the ground. Before the sapling had done shaking, and while thus perilously suspended, the bear, in a terrible rage from his wound, with his nose to the snow and his ears projecting forward, passed immediately under and almost touching him. The situation was a fearful one, for the bear, scenting but not seeing him, tore up roots and twisted down saplings as if they had been straws; circling round and round, and occasionally springing upon and fighting a log or a rock in his eagerness to grapple with his adversary. Failing to see his mortal foe, who had been suspended above him for several minutes by one arm, he took Wilburn's back track and

disappeared in the undergrowth about fifty yards off. Knowing that he would not give up the effort to find him while the track was visible, but would return in a few minutes, Wilburn dropped from his perch, ran down powder and ball in his gun without patching, and followed on as fast as he could. When he arrived at the edge of the undergrowth he heard the bear making a furious attack upon a rock that protruded out of the snow, and parting the bushes he saw him struggling as if with a living enemy, and only about fifteen paces off. Wilburn made a noise to attract his attention, and as the bear raised his head, and before he had time to spring to the attack, the report of the rifle rang along the mountain-side, and the bear rolled over dead in his tracks with a ball in his eyes. He weighed near four hundred pounds, and yielded eighteen gallons of oil.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN EXCITING WOLF-HUNT IN BLACK MOUNTAIN.

In giving the more thrilling of the hunting adventures of Wilburn Waters, the writer cannot pretend to give them in the order in which they occurred, as he is without dates as to most of them. He will content himself with giving the facts, as these are all that the reader will care about.

Some years ago, but little hunting having been done for some time, the wolves became very numerous as well as very destructive, not only in Southwestern Virginia, but fearfully so in Western North Carolina; so much so that but few sheep had escaped them in the vicinity of the Black, Yellow and Roan mountains in Rip Van Winkle's dominions. The fame of Wilburn Waters, as an intrepid and successful hunter and trapper having gone out into all that country, a number of farmers and stock-raisers whose folds had been broken up and scattered—some sixty in all—drew up an obligation to give him one sheep each for every wolf he would capture, in addition to the five dollars' bounty given by the county for each scalp.

Wilburn considered the proposition, and after killing a few that were infesting his own neighborhood, he employed one of his nearest neighbors to attend to his stock, locked up his cabin, gathered his traps, and started out upon the perilous and laborious expedition. Having reached his hunting-ground, a hundred miles away from his home, he

entered upon his business. Month after month he traversed those silent and almost impenetrable ranges, sleeping in their gorges and among their precipices, but still the game eluded him, and seemed to mock his efforts to come up with them. Finally coming on "sign," and following this till it became a broad trail, he stuck to it like a bloodhound, following it from mountain to mountain and from county to county—at one time leading him out into the open country, and then again plunging into the deepest and darkest recesses of that uninhabited and almost untrodden region.

At length the trail became so plain that he could run upon it, and estimate not only the number, but the sizes of the different individuals of the gang, from their tracks at their watering places. The sign and trail appearing to be fresh all the time, he knew he must be close upon them, and followed on from crag to crag and from cavern to cavern, for weeks, and yet they eluded him, and at night seemed to be as far from him as they were in the morning. But, having undertaken to capture them, he intended to do it, though he should have "to fight it out on that line" all the year. After having followed them thus closely, and so long and patiently, and believing them to be but a short distance off, he marked the spot at which he had arrived, and concluded to return to the nearest settlement, rest a day or two, replenish his exhausted haversack, return to the trail and never give it up as long as one of the gang remained. With this determination he started back, but had walked but a few paces, when he resolved to try the last expedient, though a dangerous one, to ascertain whether

or not they were within hearing, which was to howl. This was an important matter as well as perilous, and required to be managed with great adroitness. If an exact imitation, he knew that the gang would dash at him in the greatest fury, and if not an imitation, that it would frighten and drive them to a distant covert. He stopped, gave a long tremulous howl, as is the custom of the wolf when separated from his companions, and so exact was the imitation, that the echo was still reverberating along the distant peaks, when a portion of the gang, eleven in number, sent up a responsive howl altogether, that almost, as he expressed it, made his blood run cold, so fearful was it in the deep, dark gorges of the mountain, miles away from the nearest human habitation. Before the combined howl had ceased ringing in his ears, he heard them coming through the undergrowth, and by the time he had his large double-barrel shot-gun to his shoulder they were within a few feet of him, with foaming jaws and bloodshot eye-balls. Drawing a bead upon the largest, and waiting till another came in line, he pulled the trigger, and the two fell dead in their tracks, and at the crack of the other barrel another sprang in the air and fell motionless alongside of them. The others, instead of avenging their death, or falling upon and rending their slain companions, as they often do, and with the terrifying smell of gunpowder in their nostrils, raised a long melancholy howl and fled back into the deeper and more distant recesses of the mountain.

Securing the hides of the three he had killed, and making sure of the course the others had taken, he made his way out to the nearest settlement, rested a day or two,

replenished his haversack, and again plunged into the forest, determined not to return till he had captured the last wolf of the gang. He held out faithfully, though they led him from mountain to mountain and from gorge to gorge, to great distances and for weeks; but when he returned he brought the scalps, not only of all that gang, but of others, making in all forty-two wolves as his winter's hunt. Besides these, he captured during the hunt a number of catamounts, a few bears, an otter or two, and any number of wild turkeys and other small game.

During the same general hunt, he had an exciting time with a detachment of five wolves that had wandered off to some distance from the main gang. He was entirely alone, without even a dog, high up one of the tall peaks of the Roan mountain, and several miles away from the nearest human habitation. The five wolves he was in search of were two old ones and three half grown. They had destroyed a great deal of stock in the range as well as in the adjacent valleys, running out dogs that had been put upon the trail, and even evincing a disposition to attack man when alone.

Wilburn had found "sign" and had followed it up to a tall cliff near the summit of one of the highest and most inaccessible peaks in the range. It was a sultry, drizzly day, and the "sign" appearing to be several days old, and having greatly fatigued himself working his way up through tangled vines and laurel jungles, and climbing over and around steep and ragged precipices, he lay down to rest under a shelving rock and fell asleep. In about an hour he arose refreshed, and crawling out of his resting-

place he found that the old leader of the gang had been reconnoitering while he slept, and had passed along on a ledge a few feet below him. Picking up his gun and tomahawk, he took the track, and on approaching a precipice, he saw the old male wolf at its base, quietly licking his chops and apparently winding prey or an enemy in the distance. Stealthily advancing to within convenient range, Wilburn brought his shot-gun to bear and fired, when the largest and most formidable wolf of the gang fell and died without a struggle. Securing the skin, he made his way with great difficulty to the top of the precipice, and there, just beyond the turn of the summit, he saw the four others, three of them gamboling like puppies around the dam, not having heard the report of the gun under the cliff. They were in an open place, and it was very difficult to get within range without being seen, heard or winded, but he made out to "snake" it to within forty yards of them, and "pulled down." Two of them dropped dead, but the old dam and one of the cubs escaped into a cavern near by.

Having started out with the determination of capturing the whole family, he went to digging with a sharpened stick; he soon reached the old one, which was too large to get far into the hole, drew her out by the hind legs, and tied her feet together. He had to widen the passage for a distance of ten or twelve feet before he could reach the other. The hole, after being thus worked out, was barely large enough to admit his body, and it being impossible for the wolf to escape, he had to meet it face to face. All that he could see of the animal was its eyes, which shone like two balls of fire in the darkness of the cavern, and

having no room to operate with gun or tomahawk, he cautiously slipped his hand over the wolf's head, grasped it by the neck, brought it out and tied it as he had the other. He then marched out into the settlement with two live wolves and three skins, without having received a scratch or wasting a load of ammunition. The day's work brought him \$175, made up by the settlers, whose stock had been destroyed and whose lives had been menaced by the gang.

CHAPTER IX.

FOUR BEARS IN ONE TREE.

During the war, owing to the scarcity of ammunition and the danger of losing his stock during his absence, Willburn hunted but little. Hence bears accumulated somewhat in the neighboring mountains, and even ventured into the settlements, as if conscious that their mortal foe had given them the largest liberty to come and go at pleasure. About the close of the war, in passing over one of the mountains in his vicinity from his own to a neighbor's cabin, he came upon bear sign, and the hunting of that species of game having become second nature with him, he could not resist the temptation to return to his cabin for his dog and gun, which he had left behind, and to follow the trail, whether it should terminate in the neighboring mountains or lead to coverts many miles away. The sign having indicated to his unerring judgment, or rather instinct in such matters, that there were four bears in company—an "old she" and three half-grown cubs—he was all the more determined to follow them up, knowing that it was next to impossible for them to escape him within sight of the smoke of his own chimney, and to capture a whole family of bears at one time was rather more of a wholesale business in that line than he had been accustomed to of late years. Having returned to the trail and started the dog upon it, the eagerness with

which he bounded off convinced Wilburn that it was fresh and the game not far in advance. He followed on as rapidly as he could, and at the end of some three or four miles the dog gave notice that the game was at bay. Hurrying up, he was delighted to find all four of the bears on the topmost limbs of a very high tree on the summit of the mountain. After looking at them awhile and reasoning with himself as to the best policy to pursue under the circumstances, being alone and having but one dog, he determined to kill the old one and two of the cubs, and then, as he was in want of a pet, take the largest cub alive. But the latter he couldn't do without help, for he had tried the strength of cubs before, and could not hold and tie it without assistance.

He then shot the old one out, which fell like a beef at his feet, but the cubs being smaller and quicker in their motions, eluded his aim for some time, and the sun had gone down before he succeeded in shooting them out. The larger and finer of the cubs was still in the tree, and now it became necessary for him to keep it there, which he knew would be difficult after it had lost its companions, till he should go to the cabin he had started to visit in the morning and procure assistance. Accordingly he built a fire at the root of the tree, and telling his dog to stand sentinel during his absence, soon found his way to the cabin, several miles off. When he reached it he was disappointed to find that there was not a man about, but there were two women there, both stout and fearless, as most mountain women are, and they promised to be with

him by dawn of day in the morning, and tie the cub if he could catch and hold it. Satisfied with this arrangement, and telling them exactly how and where to find him, he returned to the tree, and found that the dog had been faithful to his trust, the cub being still in the tree, but exhibiting considerable impatience to effect a "change of base." Wilburn stretched himself upon his back near the fire, and during the weary hours of that long, cold night he kept his eye on the motions of that well-grown and active cub, as it would occasionally come down the body of the tree to within ten or a dozen feet of the ground, and then, with the apparent agility of a squirrel, mount again to the very highest limb large enough to bear its weight. He knew that it would not be apt to come down while the fire was burning brightly so close to the tree, and hence permitted it to enjoy the sport of descending and ascending at pleasure.

Just as day was breaking, the two women, true to their promise, made their appearance upon the theatre of action. He placed them at a little distance, prepared with thongs, instructed them not to speak and to remain as motionless as possible, and then lay down within reach of the tree, with the dog and the fire on the opposite side. As soon as the sun began to tinge the tree-tops, the cub knew it was time to be traveling, and gradually descended, tail foremost, as is their custom, occasionally reaching out its hind feet feeling for the earth. After considerable delay, climbing down the body of the tree and then bounding up again, as if halting between two opinions, it came within reach, and as it protruded its feet to feel for the ground, Wilburn's

iron grasp was upon each foot, and away they went down the mountain side wheelbarrow fashion, at a rapid rate, regardless of whatever interposed. Wilburn finally succeeded in getting astride of it with his hands tightly grasped about its neck, but it was larger and stronger than he had bargained for and carried him with John Gilpin speed over bushes, logs, rocks and briars, sometimes one on top and then the other, tearing nearly every rag from his body, and lacerating him with its claws from the top of his head to the soles of his feet. But he held on, for it would be a burning disgrace to lose the cub after waiting for it the livelong night and saying that he intended to take it alive. They finally reached the base of the mountain, both pretty well exhausted, but still in a terrible struggle for the mastery.

The women in the meantime followed on with the thongs as fast as they could, though far in the rear, *as they had no bear to ride*, and when Wilburn heard them coming in the distance, as they followed the broad trail left by himself and the cub, he came to the conclusion that he was not in proper costume for the reception of company, his wardrobe comprising but little besides the waistbands of his pants, suspenders and one sock. Whilst ruminating as to the best policy to adopt under the circumstances, the women, from whom he was still concealed by the thick laurel, were within a few paces of him, when he informed them it would be imprudent to come any nearer to the cub, and that if they would return to the settlement and procure assistance to get the dead bears out, he would manage to tie the cub with his gallowses, and meet them at the cabin

sometime during the day. In a word, there was no admittance for ladies at that show.

The women, having seen detached portions of his clothing in his wake, took the hint and left him and the cub to settle the difficulty in their own way. Wilburn, after considerable trouble attended with no little danger, succeeded in tying his pet tight and fast, and in due time made his appearance among his female friends, "clothed and in his right mind," having safely carried the cub to his cabin, where the writer of this saw it a few weeks after.

CHAPTER X.

FIGHT WITH A BEAR ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

One of the most dangerous and exciting encounters Wilburn Waters ever had with a bear, occurred on the first day of January, 1873, after he was sixty years of age. He had been making his home for some time with Clark Porterfield, of Grayson county, who kept good dogs and was as fond of hunting as himself. At the time spoken of, Porterfield suggested that they should take a turn in Pine mountain, a few miles off, and see if they couldn't hustle up something that would pay for the trouble as well as afford them a little sport. There having been a good deal of rain and snow, the former having frozen before the latter fell, it was very difficult to get along, particularly where the ground was anything like steep. For this reason, as well as his knowledge that the surface of the mountain was broken with precipices, chasms, and densely covered with dwarf pines and matted vines, Wilburn remonstrated against trying it at that time, but finally yielded to his companion's importunities. They started out, and had not gone very far on one of the spurs before the dogs struck a trail and dashed off toward the top of the mountain. This put "life and mettle" in Wilburn's heels, and it was not long till he left his young and active companion far in the rear. Knowing that no "varmint" but a bear would seek refuge in a spot so high and rugged, and in an atmos-

phere almost Arctic in its rigor, he hastened on as fast as he could, zigzagging along narrow ledges, sometimes losing his foot-hold and sliding back many feet until stopped by a tree or a rock, and at one place crossing a deep and dangerous chasm on a tree that had fallen across it, and which was incased in ice, he emerged into an open place on the mountain-side, and there, within about forty yards of him, he saw the two dogs at the root of a tree, and three bears in the top, one of them an uncommonly large one. He thought it was the grandest sight he ever saw in his life. He had his shot-gun with him, for a rarity in a bear-hunt, one barrel of which was charged with a musket-ball, wrapped with tow to make it fit, and the other with a dozen buck-shot. He calculated on killing all three if Porterfield, who he heard calling in the distance, should come up in time to assist him, and selected the largest for the first fire. He first tried the ball, and for the first time in his hunting career made a clear miss, the bear taking no more notice of it than if he had not fired. He then drew a bead with the barrel charged with buck-shot, and at the crack of the gun the bear came down the tree in a hurry, disabled one dog at the first pass, and seizing the other by the head they both glided down to the bottom of a deep gorge as if shot from a mortar. Seeing that the dog was no match for his powerful and maddened adversary, Wilburn, like shot from a shovel, was with them in an instant in the narrow bottom of the gorge, with tomahawk in hand. Before he had time to reflect upon the situation, he found himself, as he termed it, in a hand-to-hand fight with the bear. The bear at once let the dog go, which was too badly hurt to

render any farther assistance, and made at Wilburn in a most terrible rage. For a few minutes they took it lick about, with this difference—Wilburn making every lick with his tomahawk tell, while he successfully dodged each pass of the bear. While the combat was going on the bear was all the time slowly retreating toward a precipice a few yards off, from the brink of which he could leap into the tree-tops below, and make his escape, and finally made a rush for it, when Wilburn, seizing him by the hair, mounted him and had a fearful ride for a few jumps. While thus seated he gave him the last fatal lick between the eyes with his tomahawk, just as he reached the edge of the precipice. When the bear fell, his head and fore-feet were hanging over. One foot farther, or one lick less, and they both would have pitched headlong a hundred feet or more down jagged rocks, and the bears and wolves would thereafter have prowled and depredated at will in that locality, as their mortal foe would have gone to the happy hunting-grounds where his fathers and people had long since gone.

By this time Porterfield came up out of breath and out of patience, in not being able to make the connection in time to be in at the death of the game. He and Wilburn returned to the tree where the latter had left the two bears, but they were gone. They had come from the tree, descended a high and steep cliff, but it was so intensely cold, night coming on, and no dogs able to follow up the trail, they were forced to relinquish the hunt. They returned to the dead bear, divided and carried it out to where they had left a horse, and sometime during the night reached the residence of Mr. Porterfield nearly frozen, but happy

in the possession of a bear that weighed nearly four hundred pounds, and meat for a month that hunters love better than any other, and that Wilburn regards, as an Irishman does whisky, "the very life of man."

CHAPTER XI.

A BEAR HUNT IN THE IRON MOUNTAIN.

The following was related to the writer by a friend who took his first and last bear-hunt with Wilburn Waters some years ago.

Happening to be in Wilburn's dominions one snowy November, something less than a dozen years ago, and feeling that I could trust my steel-barrel rifle in almost any emergency, as well as having a desire to knock up the trotters of one bear during a residence of an ordinary lifetime within sight of their foraging-grounds, I had the temerity, without due and sober reflection, to ask him if he could'nt get up a chunk of a hunt for my special benefit. "Oh, yes," he replied, "there are two pretty good ones in the laurel across the ridge yonder—I saw the sign yesterday—and if you will take a stand on a branch of the mountain in the morning, I'll hustle 'em up and drive 'em out to you."

"All right," said I; "but, Wilburn, I want you to remember that I am a novice in bear-craft, and you must be careful not to send out too many at once." "Don't be uneasy," said he, "as one will be about as many as you can manage, and I should'nt be surprised if you don't think that he is *one too many* before you are done with him, for they're awful troublesome critters sometimes."

The hunt being determined upon and arranged, we had

bear-meat, corn-dodgers and wild honey for supper, and the long ride through the rarefied air of the mountains that day having whetted my appetite to a pretty keen edge, and having stowed too large a portion under my vest, I was fighting, shooting at, and running from bears the livelong night, in my troubled dreams, and rose from my bed of skins in the morning with very serious misgivings as to the wisdom of bear-hunts in general, and of the present one in particular. But, having of my own free will and accord proposed it, and Wilburn having cheerfully and promptly acceded to it, I had no alternative but to "screw my courage to the sticking point," and go into it whether I got the bear or the bear should get me. We had an early breakfast, but somehow or other my appetite was not as sharp as it was the night before, and an involuntary nervousness would occasionally creep over me, when I thought of what a dangerous animal a hunted and maddened bear was, and which I could not dispel by more than one libation of "mountain dew" which I usually carried with me in my rambles, *as an antidote for snake bites!*

Everything being ready, we swung our accoutrements around us, threw our guns across our shoulders, Wilburn whistled up his dogs, and off we started. For the first mile or two he diverted my thoughts by instructing me how to act in presence of bruin, and how and where to shoot as he approached me, during which time I stepped along lightly enough, and paid but little attention to the spurs and cliffs over and around which we had been climbing; but after walking along thus for about four miles, the laurel in which the bears held their revel came in view,

when all at once, though not without serious premonitory symptoms, my feet began to feel exceedingly heavy, and I entertained very solemn doubts as to whether there was so *very* much sport in bear-hunting after all, particularly where the chances were about equal of being eaten or to eat—the difference, if any, in my opinion, being rather in favor of the bear. My spirits, too, began to flag very perceptibly, and though I tried, I could not attribute my feelings to the weather, for, although the earth was covered with snow, the morning was bright and balmy, the sun shone out in all his splendor, and the crystalized dew-drops hanging upon the foliage of the tall hemlocks, sparkled like gems in the tresses of an oriental bride. The red-birds, all dressed in crimson sheen, flitted in happy glee from spray to spray, the squirrels played their wild gambols among the bespangled tree-tops, and all living creatures around me seemed to be as happy as a bevy of holiday-dressed children at a Sabbath-school festival. I, however, had no relish for the grand and beautiful, for of all animated nature in the wild-wood that lovely morning, I alone was to run the risk of being eaten by a bear!

At length we came to the place where I was to take my stand. It was a wild, silent spot upon the mountain-side, a few paces from the edge of the laurel where bears “most do congregate,” and as soon as Wilburn left me and disappeared in the jungle, I began to feel very uncomfortable—a sort of weakness about the waistbands of my pants—and very earnestly reasoned with myself whether or not it was right and proper to stand behind a tree and murder an innocent bear in cold blood while going about

his legitimate business! The more I thought about it the worse I felt, until my knees grew singularly weak, and if I didn't have an old-fashioned shake of ague, it was something so near akin to it that I couldn't well tell the difference; but when, a few minutes after, the perspiration broke out all over me in great big beads, I was ready to be qualified that I had the real *bona fide* Arkansas fever and ague, and thought it not only in very bad taste, but criminally imprudent, for a man in such a wretched state of health as I was at that moment, to be standing away out there on the mountain-side without a physician, or quinine, or a bottle of French brandy.

Whilst ruminating upon my condition, and the more serious probabilities of killing a bear or of a bear killing me—in which I had a very decided choice, notwithstanding the maxim that “it is a bad rule that don't work both ways”—I heard the bay of Wilburn's dogs in the distance, and all at once the skin of my head felt as tight as a raw hide on a banjo, and it seemed to me that I would never be able to shut my eyes again, though I never had better reason to keep them as wide open as possible. I would have felt more comfortable under an oyster-shell at the bottom of the ocean. Looking and listening with the most intense interest, I heard the tread of something coming that seemed to be as heavy as the march of an elephant, and I felt as if I had taken a new lease of life when the formidable animal proved to be a *boomer*, a species of mountain squirrel. Whilst wondering how so small an animal could make so big a racket, I heard the report of Wilburn's rifle away down in the jungle, and my

heart raised in thankfulness with the hope that there was one bear less to make a dinner off my bones that day. Another report soon followed, which instead of relieving my anxiety in like ratio, suggested the apprehension that Wilburn, instead of killing a bear, had probably only wounded one, and if so, and he should come across me on his way to the cliffs above, I had better be preparing my nerves for a steady aim, or saying my prayers, or perhaps both. With this unwelcome thought intruding itself, I grasped my rifle with a tenacity that a young earthquake could scarcely have shaken loose, and with a determination that nothing but desperation could have imparted, and awaited the coming of the last thing I wanted to see on the face of this green earth—the very bear I had gone out voluntarily and purposely to kill! While standing thus with one foot rather *unsteadily* planted in front, the breech of the rifle to my shoulder, and my eye running along the barrel, a hand was laid upon my shoulder from behind, and a voice, which I at once recognized as Wilburn's, said, in the sweetest tones to which I had ever listened—“*Stop, friend, hadn't you better spring your triggers and cock your gun before you shoot?*—but you needn't waste your ammunition; I've killed two bears down in the laurel, and there isn't another within ten miles of here!”

If I ever felt happier in my life I have forgotten the time, place and circumstances; my knees became firm and steady; I was all right about the waistbands; the cold sweat had vanished like the dew of the morning; I could open and shut my eyes with the facility of a frog, and have not felt a symptom of fever and ague from that day to this.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ADVENTURE WITH A MAD WOLF.

Some thirty-odd years ago, when the writer of these pages spent a large portion of his time in the woods and mountains that might have been more profitably employed in more useful pursuits, it fell to his lot, one pleasant day in autumn, to be in a deer drive with Uncle Billy Stevens, of Drutor's Valley, who was long known by most of the citizens of Abingdon, as well as by a majority of the men of Washington county, as a genial, honest, warm-hearted old man, who loved his friends and his grog, and was ever ready to let the plough stand in the furrow or the mash in the still-tub, when a friend called upon him for a hunt. On one occasion, as before said, it fell to the lot of Uncle Billy and the writer to be the drivers in a big deer-hunt on the South Fork of Holston. We had gone out into the mountain some distance, leading half a dozen dogs each, with several out in advance hunting up a trail, and as we ascended a spur, the loose dogs struck up their music, dashed off eagerly and soon disappeared in a direction contrary to that usually taken by deer—in the opposite direction from water. "I wish I may go to heaven, honey," said Uncle Billy, "if the dogs haven't hustled up a varmint of some sort, for a deer wouldn't gallop right straight off from the river as warm a day as this is, with four dogs behind him."

We kept on up the spur, but hadn't gone very far before we met the dogs trotting back with their tails down and the hair on their backs turned the wrong way. "There!" exclaimed Uncle Billy, "I told you so, and there's nary devil if they haven't jumped a wolf or a bear, and are frightened into fits." We kept on, the dogs following us very timidly and suspiciously, and soon came to a bed in the leaves in a patch of laurel, which, as soon as Uncle Billy saw, he put his hand in it and exclaimed, "By Jingo, they've jumped a wolf sure enough, and the bed is as warm as a skillet. Let's get away from here on to another spur, or we'll have no sport to-day, and them darned dogs that's been frightened won't get as far from us as our shadows for fear the infernal varmint will eat 'em up."

We changed our course, made our way farther into the recesses of the mountain, turned our dogs all out, a few at a time; started two or three deer towards the river where the standers were stationed, and made our way back to the settlements. On arriving at the cabin of Davy Stevens, a brother of Uncle Billy's, and telling him about the wolf, he remarked that the part of the mountain where the dogs had jumped him was, in his younger days, the greatest wolf-range in all this country, and then went on to relate an adventure he had with a mad wolf many years before, and which will be related in his own words, as near as the writer can recollect them.

"Some forty years ago," said he, "I went out to a cave in the mountain to salt a few cattle I had in the range. I rarely ventured far in that direction without my gun, as

bears and wolves were as plenty at that day as rabbits are now, but as I had to carry a poke of salt and a heavy bell and collar to put on an old ox among the herd, I had to leave my rifle at home. A heavy rain coming up, I was detained some time in a hollow tree, and by the time I had gathered together and salted my cattle, the sun had disappeared beyond the hills. I started out towards home, and as I topped the Double spur I heard a faint howl in a deep gorge some distance in my rear, but it was so faint I couldn't tell exactly what it was—whether a dog, a wolf or a big owl. Stopping a few moments to listen, the sound became more distinct and seemed to be coming rapidly nearer. I now knew it to be the howl of a wolf, and from the direction the animal was taking, it was evident he was following my track. I thought this very strange, as a wolf is a cowardly cuss, avoids the track of a man, and skulks from his presence. I at once concluded it must be famished, and wanted to make a supper off my bones. This thought made my feet feel very light, and I didn't let much grass grow under 'em as I ran down the spur, leaping rocks and logs like a buck. Before I reached the bottom I heard the wolf top the ridge precisely where I had crossed it, and start directly down the spur which I was just leaving. Fright gave me speed, and reaching a low place where the heavy shower a few hours before had left a pond some twelve or fifteen feet in diameter around a big hemlock, the limbs of which grew out to within a few feet of the ground, and finding from his howls that the wolf had gained upon me very rapidly, I waded in and climbed the tree. The sun was just about setting, and I had scarcely

hidden myself as well as I could among the foliage, when the wolf, one of the largest I had ever seen, came bounding along on my track, with long flakes of yellow foam streaming from his mouth, and eyes like two balls of fire. He was so intent on overtaking me, and running with such eagerness, that he overran the trail some distance, and finding himself at fault, he circled round awhile, and then came back to the edge of the pond where he had lost my track, which he was now unable to find. He looked in every direction, and perhaps scenting me, trotted around the pond a time or two, and then raised a long, tremulous, melancholy howl. By this time darkness was beginning to fall upon the scene, and I arrived at the unpleasant conclusion that I was to have my lodging place for the night among the limbs of that hemlock. After remaining some ten or fifteen minutes, as if conscious that I was somewhere near, and as if undetermined what to do under the circumstances, he took the back-track and galloped off slowly up the spur we had come down less than an hour before, howling at intervals, and when I heard him cross the summit, and the last faint echo of his receding howl died away as he descended the opposite side, I dropped out of my perch and took to my heels like a quarter-nag. In an hour I was safe and snug inside of my cabin.

"Being pretty well broken down by my long and exciting foot-race, it was not long till I was in bed and fast asleep. About midnight a terrible storm came up, and right in the midst of it, while the lightning was flashing, the thunder pealing and the wind shrieking, I heard a

tremendous rumpus in the yard between my two big curs and some sort of a varmint. I got up and went to the door, but the night was so dark I could see nothing, though the dogs seemed to be in a death struggle with something that appeared to be a match for them. I lighted a torch and stepped out, and there, within a few feet of me, stood the very wolf I had seen in the mountain, viciously snapping at the dogs as they held him at bay. A wolf is afraid of fire, but notwithstanding the torch in my hand he rushed towards me with great fury and foaming at the mouth like a mad dog, when the dogs clinched him behind and stopped him. I at once saw that he was mad, for I knew that a wolf that had his senses about him would never have come into the yard to such severe dogs, or rush at a man with a fire-brand in his hand. I stepped back into the cabin and got my rifle, and holding the torch in my left hand along the barrel I put a bullet between his eyes, which settled his hash, and then went back to bed.

"Next morning I rose early and went out and found that my dogs were both badly hurt, torn and bleeding in various places. Fearing that my suspicions of the wolf being mad might be correct, I chained them and went to doctoring their wounds. In less than two weeks both of them took the hydrophobia and I had to put an end to their sufferings with the same rifle that ended the career of the mad wolf."

CHAPTER XIII.

ADVENTURE WITH A FOUR-PRONGED BUCK IN THE HOLSTON.

The writer hopes to be pardoned for giving a narration of an exciting adventure in which he acted a prominent part. A number of years ago, when I was a younger and much more active man than I am at present, it fell to my lot to participate in a deer-drive that came very near being my last.

Colonel Addison White, at that time a representative in Congress from Kentucky, and now a resident of Huntsville, Alabama, was spending a few weeks in Abingdon (of which he is a native), and as he was, as he still is, a genial, whole-souled gentleman, a splendid shot, and passionately fond of hunting, those of his friends here who kept hounds and were as fond of the sport as himself, made up a hunt for his gratification, and repaired to the mountains with a tent and such creature comforts, both solid and liquid, as were deemed necessary for a sojourn of several days in the woods. Arriving at the bank of the river, some dozen miles from town, we pitched our tent, made a huge fire of logs in front of the opening, partook of supper, and fed the waiting hounds all standing round in couples. This accomplished, some stretched themselves upon their blankets, others amused themselves at "Old Sledge" and other pastimes, while the "drivers," of whom I happened to be one, divided the dogs among them, filled

their haversacks and bottles, and for the purpose of making as early a start as possible, proceeded to the mountain, a few miles away, to rest beneath the tall hemlocks, where, deprived of the hilarity and good cheer of the encampment, they enjoyed the soothing influences of the "voices of the night."

For the information of the reader who may not be familiar with the *modus operandi* of a deer-drive, it may not be out of place to give a brief explanation: All except the drivers take stands. Deer, in warm weather, usually seek the highest, coolest and most inaccessible peaks in the mountains, and when started from their lairs run certain well-known routes, and make for the nearest stream, at certain points or crossings, which hunters call "stands." Nine deer out of ten, and nine times out of ten, if started in the same range, will make directly for these crossings, which are all known to practical hunters.

On the occasion referred to, Colonel White was stationed at one of the best stands on the bank of the Holston, and it fell to my lot, as before stated, to be one of the drivers. Early in the morning, while all was serene and quiet, and the wild-flowers were budding beneath the moisture that nature had distilled upon them during the night, I untethered my canine companions and started them out upon their mission. They had trailed off but a short distance, when they "opened" in lively and eager chorus, soon jumped a large four-pronged buck, in full view from where I was standing, which, from the direction he took, I was satisfied would attempt to cross the river at the stand occupied by Colonel White. Believing this, I followed on

as rapidly as possible, and was surprised when I reached the river and had crossed to the stand to learn from the Colonel that he had neither heard a dog nor seen a deer. But, while we were talking about it, we heard a solitary dog coming down the bank of the stream, on the side we were on, and a moment after we saw the buck—the same I had seen in the mountain several hours before—going out on the opposite side, one hundred and eighty yards above, as was subsequently ascertained by actual measurement. The deer, not being as closely pressed as is sometimes the case, had circled around awhile in the hills, crossed above through an unguarded stand, and was now trying to elude the dogs by recrossing the river and making back toward the mountain. But, as before said, we saw him going out on the opposite side, one hundred and eighty yards above us, and seeing that Colonel White was about to shoot, I suggested that the game was too far off and running too fast for a rifle, and that he would miss him, but he replied he would be sure to miss him if he *didn't* shoot, and blazed away. The buck, with as much *nonchalance* as if nothing had happened, shook the water from his flanks and disappeared in the undergrowth. My own impression was that the ball had not reached him, but the Colonel contended that he had struck him, and that the wound was fatal, as he had seen the mist fly from his hair at the crack of the gun. To settle the question beyond cavil, I took the dog, which had come to us a few minutes after the buck had disappeared, knowing that if he had been wounded he would not go far from the river, and started across. Coaxing the dog along as I waded into the

stream backward, which was about one hundred and fifty yards wide, deep and rapid—being swollen by recent rains—I fell backward over a sunken rock, and of course went under, neck and heels. Belonging, as I did, to that branch of the church militant, sometimes sacrilegiously termed “web-footed,” because they maintain the “Apostolic doctrine of immersion,” I didn’t mind practicing what I preached, but struck out, swam across, followed by the dog, and put him upon the track, the Colonel meanwhile remaining at his post. As soon as the dog found the trail and started, I “shed my linen” and so forth, and spread them out on the bank to dry. Whilst thus divested, and meditating upon the uncouth and uncomfortable appearance our first parents must have presented before they learned the art of sewing fig-leaves together, I heard the dog in full tongue, circling around toward the river a short distance above me. For the purpose of heading the game down stream towards where the Colonel was standing, I started up the bank, but coming to a rugged cliff, bristling with a formidable growth of bamboo briars, I concluded it would not be very pleasant to pass through them in the unprotected and delicate condition in which I happened to be at the moment, and plunged into the stream for the purpose of swimming around the barrier. Just as I had gotten about half-way along the cliff, I heard a racket above, and looking up I saw the buck, with the dog hanging to him, suspended between “wind and water,” and the next instant the buck, dog and myself were about as near being in a pile as three animals could well be in five feet water. Knowing that a wounded buck was dangerous, or even at

bay when not wounded, and that I was bound to "go up the spout" or to the bottom of the stream if the dog didn't save me, and seeing the enraged animal turn toward me with his blazing black eyes and hair all turned the wrong way, I called upon the dog as loudly and as earnestly as ever a man called upon a friend in a pinch, and he responded nobly. He swam up and seized the buck by the throat, but was stricken to the bottom in an instant, and when he again appeared on the surface, he was at least twenty feet from where he went under. Meantime the buck was approaching me with all the ferocity of a tiger, and I retreating as fast as a man could retreat in water up to his chin—I had no time to swim—when the dog again grappled him behind, and they had it round and round in the current, the dog holding his grip with a tenacity that proved he comprehended the difficulties of the situation. Here the scene became exciting, and, unlike the woman who, when she saw her husband and a bear fighting, said she didn't care which whipped, I must confess I had a very decided choice. The tussel lasted several minutes, and I became so much interested in it, and had so much sympathy for one of the combatants, that I forgot my danger, when I had ample time to get out of the water and take a tree if I found it necessary. Colonel White, hearing the melee in the water, came up, waded into the stream up to his arm-pits, held the muzzle of his gun to the buck's head and fired, and the first I knew of his presence was the report of his rifle and seeing the buck float off with a bullet in his head. On getting the deer out on dry land we found that the Colonel had given him a fatal shot the first time,

the ball having entered his flank and ranging diagonally through his body had lodged under the skin behind the opposite fore-leg. A right good shot with a rifle at one hundred and eighty yards, and the game at full speed.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER ADVENTURE WITH A WOUNDED BUCK.

The writer having related one hunting adventure in which he himself participated, he is tempted to narrate one more—and only one more.

A number of years ago I had two friends living not far from the Iron mountain, where most of my hunting was done, by the names of William B. and David L. Clark. They were brothers, and always ready for a hunt or any other kind of adventure in which there was sport or excitement. William, at the time of which I write, had a good farm, an interesting family, kept horses and hounds, was the most daring and successful in all this mountain region except Wilburn Waters—and even excelled him in deer-driving—and all the hunters within miles, when they felt like enjoying something extra in the sporting line, flocked to his hospitable and pleasant home, where they knew the latch-string always hung on the outside. Not only so, but he was the best marksman as well as the best driver in all the mountains, and was always ready, no matter what else might be on hand, to take a hunt with a friend. He was one of nature's noblemen, and positively, and by odds, in my opinion, the best man I ever knew, in any and every sense; and I here take occasion to pay his memory this passing tribute, because he has gone to the land of shadows—his life, in the prime of his manhood, was laid upon

his country's altar in defence of the "Lost Cause." He was not a professor of religion, though I always thought he professed it in the *natural way*. He had a heart in him big enough for the Giant of Gath, a benevolence and disinterestedness as pure as the mountain and the lake, a hand as open as the day—in a word, he was the only man I ever knew in whom I could not suggest some improvement were he to be "reconstructed."

His brother David, now a citizen of High Point, North Carolina, and an artist of some celebrity, was younger, unmarried, and lived with him, and was somewhat like him in some of his characteristics. He also had a passion for hunting, but while the former rarely wasted time and ammunition upon smaller game, "all were fish that came into the net" of the latter, from a snow-bird to a big owl, or from a squirrel to a bear. He usually carried both a rifle and a shot-gun, with a tomahawk and a butcher-knife, so as to be prepared for whatever might come in the way. He was as fearless as a Turk, and was one of our most successful hunters.

These two friends and myself had arranged for a hunt among ourselves, and I rode over to their home, nine miles off, in the night, to have an early start to the mountain next morning. I had been hunting a long time, but always preferring the post of "driver," had never had the pleasure of killing a deer. William Clark was to do the driving on this occasion, and David and myself were to occupy the stands. It was a bright and bracing morning, and a shower the night before had so dampened the earth as to enable the dogs to trail without difficulty. As I had never killed a

deer, I was anxious to make sure work of it, and had prepared myself with a large shot-gun, six feet in the barrel, and carrying twenty-four buck-shot. I occupied the best stand, as the brothers were more anxious, if possible, than I was myself, that I should "bag the game." I posted myself with my back against a double tree on the bank of the river, where the stream was some one hundred and fifty yards wide, and with my heart thumping and my fingers itching to pull the trigger, I awaited the coming of the game, which I was sure would come, for William Clark never failed to do what he promised, and he had promised to send me a deer that morning. I was not kept long in suspense. Listening very intently, I heard a *chug* in the water, and looking toward the opposite bank I saw a very large buck dashing through the rocky and turbid stream directly towards me. To my excited vision he looked as large as a three-year old steer, with a heavy and wide-spreading head of horns. I stood as motionless as the double tree against which I was leaning, and waited till he came within fifty yards, when I drew a bead and let him have it right in the face, his body being in the water. At the crack of the gun we both fell—it *shot at both ends!* It kicked me—the gun, not the buck—into the fork of the tree, where I was as tight and fast as a glut in a rail-cut.

Here was a pretty predicament to be in, squirming and twisting like a worm on a hook in the fork of the tree, and a wounded buck only a few feet off. While trying to wriggle myself loose, I could distinctly hear the frenzied animal floundering in the water, and momentarily expected

to feel his antlers, though I couldn't see him, and to receive a wound which I would never be able to see without performing one of the feats of the India-rubber man in Old John Robinson's Circus, was rather more than I had bargained for, or was willing to put up with. I finally cork-screwed myself out, and there was the buck, not a dozen yards from where my load of buck-shot met him, floundering and charging round among the rocks, and seeming to be doubtful as to what direction he ought to take. I proceeded to reload—being careful to be more moderate in my charge—and stepping away from the forked tree as a criminal would from the stocks, and was about to fire the second time when I heard the report of David's rifle a few feet off, which put an end to the capers of my buck, and took away exactly half of my laurels.

On getting the buck out of the water we found that seventeen out of my twenty-four buck-shot had penetrated his face and head, and both eyes were shot out. I have never since put twenty-four buck-shot in a gun, and have never fired one with my back to a forked tree.

CHAPTER XV.

AMUSING ADVENTURES WITH BEARS.

The following short chapter, comprising a couple of anecdotes, may or may not be strictly true, but the writer gives them as they were related to him, and was acquainted with the characters named. The reader can either peruse or skip it, as he will not gain much by reading, or lose much by not reading.

Not a great many years ago there were living in Washington county, within fifteen miles of Abingdon, two old gentlemen, by the names of John R. and James H., familiarly called by their neighbors "Uncle Johnny" and "Uncle Jimmy." They lived near together, not far from the base of the Iron mountain. The first was an old and experienced bear-hunter, but the other, although he had some aspirations in that direction, had never been so fortunate as to get into a successful hunt. Uncle Johnny, having been out one day to salt his cattle on the range, came across fresh bear sign, and meeting with Uncle Jimmy as he was hastening home for his dogs and gun, told the latter he would give him an opportunity of killing a bear if he would go with him. "All right—I'm in," replied Uncle Jimmy, "that's one thing I've been wanting to do, for lo! these many years." They soon got ready and started out. About half-way up the mountain, the dogs in advance of them brought something to bay, and the two old men

hastening up found that they had treed a good-sized bear. "Just hold on, Jimmy," said Uncle Johnny, "till I put a bullet through his smeller, which will bring him down out of there quicker than no time—for a bear can't stand to be touched at either end—and as soon as he touches the ground the dogs, who understand their business, will seize him by each side of his head and hold him as tight as if he was in a dead-fall; when you can take my butcher-knife and cut his throat." "All right, I'm in," repeated Uncle Jimmy, "and if I don't open the cuss' juglar, you may shoot me with a pack-saddle." The bullet was fired, the nose split, and down came bruin to the foot of the tree. As Uncle Johnny had predicted, the dogs seized him on each side, as he sat upright against the tree. "Now's your time," exclaimed Uncle Johnny, "just walk up and cut his throat; he can't hurt you, for the dogs will hang to him like a sticking-plaster, and won't let go till it thunders." "All right, I'm in," repeated Uncle Jimmy, and cautiously walking up to do his part of the work, he attempted to lay his left hand on top of the bear's head while he cut his throat with the right, when bruin seized him by the left arm, which so much surprised and alarmed him, that he stood as motionless as if paralyzed, with knife upraised but without attempting to strike. Uncle Johnny, seeing how matters stood and growing impatient, exclaimed "Jimmy, why in the dickens don't you cut the cuss' throat?" "Why don't I?" rejoined Uncle Jimmy; "why don't you see the darned thing's a bitin'?"

Uncle Jimmy finally comprehended the situation, and very naturally concluded that now, if ever, was the time

for action, cut the bear's head nearly off with one swipe, and escaped with slight injury. As long as he lived he loved to relate his adventure with that "cussed bar."

The other anecdote is about as follows:

Soon after the close of the war, a very large bear, in crossing from one mountain to another, passed near Abingdon. Some of the young men armed themselves, called up their dogs, mounted their horses and were soon on the trail. Some few miles from town, in close pursuit, they passed through the farm of a good old citizen, who happened to be out in one of his fields, with his dog following him. Hearing the noise of the chase, and looking up he saw the bear floundering through the snow and coming directly towards him. Being unarmed, and not exactly ready to be eaten just at that moment, he sprang to the fence a few feet off, and climbed to the top of a stake, determined to give the bear as wide a berth as possible. While thus perched, the stake gave way at the bottom and pitched him to the ground face-foremost. It occurred to him very suddenly that he had heard or read that a bear would not molest a dead body, and that he might escape by feigning to be in that condition. His fall frightened the bear and turned him in another direction, but his own dog, not exactly understanding the strategy of his master, ran up and began to smell about him as he lay upon his face in the snow. Thinking it was the bear, and that the critical moment had come when "to be or not to be" was the great problem with him, he lay as motionless as possible, and thus, in suppressed and sepulchral tones, addressed the supposed monster:—"Go on, bear, go on—the

hunters will kill you if you stop—besides, I'm dead—have been dead a week—and ain't fit to eat no how!"

The young man who had approached and heard this earnest appeal to the supposed bear, was never forgiven for having divulged it, as long as the worthy farmer lived.

CHAPTER XVI.

FIRST WHITE SETTLER IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA.

We now come to the third division of subjects to be treated—the first settlers on Holston and the subsequent history of Southwestern Virginia.

Tradition informs us that the first white adventurer who made his home in the Valley of Holston, was an Englishman by the name of St. Clair, who had ingratiated himself with the Indians, and erected his cabin near where the old Church stands at St. Clair's Bottom, in what is now Smyth county. At what period he fixed his home there is not known; but it is supposed to have been about the time of Braddock's defeat, which was in 1755

Between 1755 and 1760, an enterprising gentleman by the name of Patton made his way westward of the line of civilization, and appeared on the head waters of the Holston. He was accompanied by three relatives, two by the name of Buchanan, and one by the name of Campbell, besides some two or three other persons. From Mr. Patton and the three others named, sprang the families who first peopled this end of the State. The Buchanans intermarried with the Pattons, and Campbell was the father of General William Campbell, of King's mountain memory. From these sprang the Prestons, Floyds and Thompsons, who subsequently owned the Saltworks, Burk's Garden, and all

that magnificent boundary including the Seven Mile Ford, the estate of Mr. James M. Byars and all the intermediate lands.

Mr. Patton and his associates came with compass and chain, for the purpose of "spying out the land," and surveying and locating such portions as promised to become unusually valuable in the future. Somewhere in the vicinity of what is now known as Seven Mile Ford, they met with St. Clair, a white man in Indian garb, on a hunting and trapping expedition. Surprised to find a white man where they supposed themselves the first of the race who had ventured thus far into the wilderness. Mr. Patton questioned him as to his knowledge of the country, and was astonished as well as gratified to find him a man of more than ordinary intelligence, an experienced woodsman, and familiar with all that broad belt of rich lands between the Apalachian and Cumberland mountains.

Mr. Patton proposed to employ him both as a guide and a protection against the Indians, provided they should meet with them during their stay upon this, one of their favorite hunting grounds. St. Clair informed him that to survey the lands would be a dangerous undertaking and might forfeit the lives of the whole company should the red men catch them at it, but that he would show him the choicest sections and guarantee the safety of the company, on condition that after Mr. Patton should have located such boundaries as he might desire, he would survey and enter a certain boundary for him (St. Clair) which he would show him. Mr. Patton of course agreed to this, especially as it was "Hobson's choice" with him. The

agreement being settled, Mr. Patton surveyed and took possession of the large boundary where they were then standing, including the magnificent estates above mentioned.

They then proceeded to the "Lick" where the Saltworks are now situated, and where the aborigines had been making salt from seeps from time immemorial, near the present residence of Mr. Palmer, the whole of that beautiful and rich alluvial bottom then being a lake. Several thousand acres were here surveyed and located. (They then proceeded up the North Fork of Holston, and appropriated all that valuable land in Rich Valley comprising the estate of Captain Charles Taylor and others adjacent. This, it may be thought, should have satisfied the most extravagant covetousness for the acquisition of lands, but Mr. Patton was still desirous of securing more, when they, with great difficulty, crossed what are now known as Flat-top and Church mountains, and laid their chains upon that immense and valuable blue-grass boundary known as the Cove, and now in the possession of the Bowens, Barnses, and others, in Tazewell county.

Partially satisfied for the time being, and winter warning them of its approach, Mr. Patton proposed that they should return to the Valley of Holston, and survey and locate for St. Clair the boundary for which he had stipulated. They accordingly retraced their way back across the mountains to the South Fork, where St. Clair pointed out the coveted boundary, which included all the land along the river, especially on the south side, which is now known as St. Clair's Bottom, then covered with splendid timber, full of pure, bold springs, and abounding with cane and nutritious wild grasses.

Not long subsequent to this, Mr. Patton met in his rambles the pioneer Burk, who revealed to him the discovery he had made of that magnificent body of land ever since known as Burk's Garden, in Tazewell county. From the description given him Mr. Patton was captivated, and proposed to the discoverer if he would show it to him, and if it proved to be half as valuable as represented, he would be at all the expense of surveying, platting and entering it, and lay off such portion of it to him (Burk) as he might designate. Burk, being a poor man, readily entered into the arrangement, but the whole of the Garden, the arable portion of which comprises some fifty thousand acres, eventually came into Patton's possession, was inherited by a grandson bearing his name, and squandered in dissipation by the possessor, who died at twenty-eight years of age. One thousand acres in that Garden is now a fortune for a man of reasonable desires. Mr. Patton thus secured all the finest lands on the principal sources of the broad and beautiful Tennessee, and yet, although the third generation has not passed away, scarcely an acre of his vast and splendid domain is now in possession of his descendants.

It was not many years after Mr. Patton's first adventure, before settlements began to appear at and near Abingdon. A man by the name of Harper, who lived the lonely life of a hermit, erected a cabin and cleared a patch in the lower end of Druton's Valley. Another, by the name of Sharp, made an entry a few miles west of him, not far from the Virginia and Tennessee line. One of the first settlers at Wolf Hills—now Abingdon—if not the very first, was a man by the name of Black, whose cabin was near the base of the hill, a short distance south of the pre-

sent residence of Colonel A. C. Cummings. The neighborhood took the name of Wolf Hills from the fact that the headquarters of these animals were in a cave on the lot and in rear of the residence of Mrs. A. E. Campbell. Dr. Smith, who is supposed to have been the next settler after Mr. Black, built his house about the year 1760 on the lot now owned and occupied by Henry S. Preston, Esq. When Captain Conn came to Abingdon before the Revolution, Dr. Smith had been dead some years, and his widow was keeping a public house. Captain Conn boarded with and afterwards married her. She was a native of South Carolina.

In 1786 Abingdon was a smart little village with two hotels—one on the lot occupied by the family of Thaddeus S. Hains, deceased, and the other on the spot now occupied by Messrs. Keller & Hines as a liquor saloon: the first kept by Trooper Armstrong, and the latter by Mrs. McDonald. The first court was held in a grove of hickory saplings on the brow of the hill in rear of Mr. Greenway's store, and the first courthouse was in the middle of the main and cross streets near the present courthouse. The oldest house now in Abingdon is that occupied by the Weed Sewing Machine Company, opposite Mr. Greenway's store. There was no house west of it in the village limit. From this westward nearly to the creek was a wild plum and chinquapin thicket, interspersed with large timber, chiefly white oak. On the corner now occupied by the store of Messrs. Aston & Honaker stood William Greenway's blacksmith shop, who excelled in the manufacture of sickles. The next house on the same side of Main street east, was a log cabin, used for a store in front and a

dwelling in rear, on the lot now occupied by Mr. James W. Preston, then owned by a man by the name of Freel. There was no house east of this except that of Mrs. Smith, before mentioned. On the opposite, or south side of the street, the first house east was where the Washington House now stands, and was occupied by Dr. Grass, and upon this lot were born the elder F. P. Blair and General Armstrong, Secretary of War under President Madison. A man by the name of Wise lived upon the lot now occupied by the Arlington House. James Redpath, a carpenter, lived where the handsome brick residence of Dr. R. J. Preston now stands, and the corner was occupied by Kit Achlin, who kept a dead-fall even at that early day, and he has had many a successor in Abingdon. William Brice built a house where the Colonnade now rears its stately walls, but it was burnt down in a short time. These comprised nearly all of Abingdon in 1786.

In 1798 Henry Clay and Captain Henry St. John Dixon came to Abingdon together for the purpose of settling, provided the country suited them. The former, after looking around for a week or two, proceeded on to Kentucky, where his mother had settled after her second marriage, and the latter, having become acquainted with the family of Mr. Dick White, on the farm now owned by Mr. W. H. Betts, married one of his daughters, and lived for many years where the Stonewall Jackson Institute now stands.

These facts, which the writer has from reliable sources, are thrown in here to preserve them for the future historian, as all who were familiar with them have long since passed away.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ABINGDON OF MODERN TIMES.

Having glanced, in the preceding chapter, at Abingdon as it was in the latter part of the past century, it may not be out of place to devote a short chapter to it as it is in this year of our Lord 1878.

Abingdon was endowed with its name anterior to 1776, but it was not laid off in regular lots, streets and alleys till a later period, perhaps not before 1781. The streets, of which there are seven, intersect each other at right angles—three east and west, and four north and south, with an equal number of alleys running in the same directions. The streets are sixty feet wide and the alleys sixteen. The main street is Macadamized (as are several others partially), with brick pavements on either side, from one end of the town to the other. The population is about fifteen hundred. There is no place of its size in the State more noted for fashion, taste and morality, with the usual proportion of loafers and gentlemen of leisure; and like all other small places where there is or has been considerable wealth, a right smart sprinkling of what some people would term aristocracy, but which, in reality, is nothing more than a decent observance of the conventionalities of life. Many of the private residences as well as public buildings are of brick, large and tasty, and a number of them three-stories high. They are generally neat,

some of them approaching elegance, and but few dilapidated, though one here and there may look as if it had been rocked by an earthquake, or had danced to the piping of a hurricane, at some period in its history. We claim to have one of the most capacious and convenient court-houses in the Commonwealth, and by some it is considered a model in architecture, with its massive pillars and towering steeple, though the writer must confess that he cannot exactly see it in that light.

We are a great church-going people, and have a variety of denominations. For instance, we have two Methodist Churches—Episcopal and Protestant—a Baptist, Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal and Roman Catholic, and for good measure we have thrown in a Swedenborgian Temple, and a few Lutherans, Universalists and Christian Baptists “laying around loose.” In all these Churches are regular services, except the Baptist, which is rather too far from water to be very vigorous, and the Swedenborgian. We have three large and well-kept hotels, nine variety stores, two drug stores, two fancy stores, two or three drinking saloons, half a dozen confectionaries, an agricultural warehouse, a bakery, a billiard saloon, an iron foundry, three or four blacksmith and as many wheelwright shops, two tanneries, two or three saddle and harness establishments, any number of carpenters, painters, shoemakers, tailors, brick and stone masons, a large brick town-hall, a library association and reading-room, in which may be found all the leading literature of the day, and last, though not least, two of the best weekly papers within a circuit of a dozen miles, and a job office. The town was incorporated

by legislative enactment many years ago, and, city-like, has a mayor and common council, who maintain the peace and dignity of the corporation, and periodically enforce the hog law.

We have, as is the case in all places where people get sick and die, or fall out with and wrong each other, a redundancy of doctors and lawyers—five or six of the former and a baker's dozen of the latter—none of them, probably, making fortunes very rapidly by their professions. There seems to be no possible chance for a diminution of lawyers shortly, but there is a bare probability that some one of the doctors may take a dose of his own medicine one of these days, and if so, the jig is certainly up with him. One of our citizens (Judge Johnston) is a United States Senator, and we have a score or less who would love to be in the House of Representatives. And right here it might be said we have three banks, all as stubborn as mules since the Legislature has limited interest to six per cent., two or three insurance companies, a machine shop operated by steam, two tin and copper-smith establishments, a photograph gallery, two barber shops, and the biggest sort of a colored school.

But the chief pride and boast of Abingdon are, or ought to be, its educational facilities—its schools and colleges. Within the village limits there are three first-class female colleges. The oldest, and probably best sustained, is Martha Washington, under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and directed and controlled by a board of trustees appointed, originally, by the Legislature. The building and grounds are of the most elabo-

rate and magnificent order, unsurpassed for beauty and convenience in the South or out of it. The grounds comprise some twelve acres, and are gorgeously ornamented with trees, and shrubs and flowers. There is more than a mile of continuous winding walks for the young ladies to promenade in, all tastefully bordered with flowering shrubbery. Fruits in variety, including grapes and berries in lavish abundance, grow in all parts of the grounds, at all times in their season accessible to the inmates; and the young ladies seem, in their beautiful and well-ordered "home-school," to be as happy as the first inhabitants of Eden *before that snake came along!* The buildings are extensive, convenient and imposing, and capable of accommodating from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and fifty boarders. The faculty is equal to any anywhere; and if the writer were young again, he might be bewildered at the sight of the bright eyes, sunny tresses, and fairy-like forms that sport and gambol amid the flowers of the campus on calm summer evenings. Some of the young men are usually crazy, but they dare not pass the enclosure except to see a sister or a *cousin*—and they all have cousins, of course—and even then nearly every tree and bush and flower seems to say "thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

The Stonewall Jackson Institute, under the patronage of the Presbyterian Church, is yet in its infancy, comparatively, but promises to become popular as it becomes older and better known. The buildings, formerly the residence of General John B. Floyd, ex-Governor of Virginia and Secretary of War in President Buchanan's Cab-

inet, are large, handsome and well arranged, and the grounds, though less extensive than those of Martha Washington, are, nevertheless, extensive enough for usefulness and pleasure, and are handsomely embellished. It also has an able faculty, is admirably managed, and is doing a glorious work for the present as well as the future.

The Catholic Convent, called "Academy of Visitation, B. V. M.," is a large building, with some three acres of ornamental grounds attached, and a willow-bordered stream flowing through the center. It is also in its infancy, conducted by a Mother Superior and a corps of Sisters, has made a favorable impression upon the public, and is liberally patronized for a young institution in an almost exclusively Protestant community.

In addition to the foregoing institutions for the education of females, Abingdon has a very excellent Male Academy, and a few miles away, in a retired and beautiful valley, Emory and Henry College, which grades as high as any in the South, except, perhaps, the Universities. Before the war this College had an annual matriculation of from two to three hundred, and even now, in the impoverished and still partially unsettled state of affairs, has within its walls more than one hundred students; but a chapter will be devoted to this institution in the progress of this work.

If there is any more picturesque country than that which surrounds Abingdon, the writer has never been so fortunate as to see it—that is, according to his idea of the grand and beautiful in nature. For a mile or two around the landscape is undulating, interspersed with bolder hills, generally wooded, standing out like islands

in a storm-tossed sea. During spring and summer the whole face of the earth, except cultivated fields, seems to be covered with a carpet of green irregularly figured with wild flowers—a rural picture with a frame-work of mountains.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, ITS ORGANIZATION, ETC.

Washington county is a part of the territory of which George Washington said in one of his patriotic appeals in the darkest hour of the Revolution—"If the armies of George the Third drive me from the lowlands, I will plant my banner on the mountains of West Augusta, where I will draw around me the brave men who will yet achieve our independence."

The Commonwealth and this county were organized the same year—1776. The first court for Washington county was held at Black's Fort, now Abingdon, on the 28th of January, 1777. The following gentlemen were appointed justices by Patrick Henry, the first Governor, on the 21st of December, 1776: Arthur Campbell, William Campbell, Evan Shelby, David Smith, William Edmondson, John Campbell, Joseph Martin, Alexander Buchanan, James Dysart, John Kinkead, John Anderson, James Montgomery, John Coulter, John Snody, George Blackburn and Thomas Martin. William Campbell and Joseph Martin administered the oath of justice of the peace and of a justice of the county court in chancery to Arthur Campbell, and he afterwards administered it to William Campbell, William Edmondson, John Campbell, Joseph Martin, John Kinkead, John Anderson, James Montgomery,

John Snody and George Blackburn. James Dysart was the first sheriff, appointed by Governor Henry on the 21st of December, 1776, and David Campbell was at the same time appointed clerk of the court.

At the next term of the court William Campbell was appointed by the Governor lieutenant-colonel of the county, and Arthur Campbell lieutenant.

On the 29th of January, 1777, Evan Shelby was appointed colonel of militia. The first constables were James Wharton, James Laughlin, William Lean, Robert Brown, Christopher Acklin, John Fane and James Steel. Ephriam was the first Commonwealth's attorney.

At the same court liquors were rated as follows: Rum, 16s. per gallon; rye whiskey, 8s.; corn whiskey, 4s. A bowl of rum toddy, with loaf sugar, 2s.; with brown sugar, 1s.

Luke Bowyer was the first lawyer accorded as having taken the oath to practice, and Robert Preston was the first county surveyor, having his commission from the masters of William and Mary College.

The land on which Abingdon is built was given to the county by Thomas Walker, Joseph Black and Samuel Briggs, in April, 1777.

The first grand jury was impaneled at the May term in 1777, and consisted of the following gentlemen: Robert Craig, Robert Buchanan, Andrew Buchanan, Samuel Buchanan, Robert Edmondson, William Kennedy, Andrew Colvill, Samuel Briggs, John Sharp, Alexander Breckinridge, Andrew Edmondson, George Finley, William Edmondson, David Gatewood and John Loveless. The

only presentments they made were as follows: "Against Margaret Drumman for having a bastard child, and James Bryant for not having the road in good repair he is surveyor of."

At the March term in 1779 it was ordered the charges the current year for good rum should be 4s. per gallon; full-proof whiskey, 2s.; warm dinner, 15c.; cold dinner, 9c.; good breakfast, 12c.; oats and corn, 4c. per gallon, and lodging, with clean sheets, 2c.

The William Campbell above spoken of was General William Campbell of King's mountain fame, and David Campbell, the first clerk, was the uncle of the late Governor David Campbell, and the brother of Arthur and John Campbell connected with the organization of the county.

Washington county was the first spot of earth named in honor of the Father of his Country. The great highway from east to west, and which passes through the centre of Abingdon, was known originally as "Boon's Trace," and is the identical route blazed out by the great pioneer of that name in his first expedition from North Carolina to Kentucky, a route that had been traveled for ages before by elk and buffalo, and which subsequently became one of the principal war-paths of the red man in his predatory incursions towards the border.

In the early settlement of the country there was a block-house near Abingdon, where Captain Frank Findlay's mill now stands, called Black's Fort, into which the families of the scattered settlers gathered when alarmed by the approach of Indians. The very year of the organiza-

tion of the county, and upon the very day of the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence, the Indians made a stealthy marth into the settlement, caught a small party of settlers on their way from the fort to the clearing of Parson Cummings, two miles off, killed one of them, and the grave in which his dust reposes, marked by a rude stone with the inscription, "Henry Creswell, killed July 4, 1776," formed the nucleus of the village cemetery, now peopled by the dead of three generations.

As stated in a previous chapter, the hill upon which Abingdon is located was first settled by a man by the name of Black, then a Dr. Smith, and these were followed by the Campbells, Cummingses, Pipers, Conns, Prestons, Whites, Craigs, Walkers, McCullochs, Edmondsons, Lowrys, Findlays, Smyths and others, many of whose descendants are still in the county, and among the most prominent citizens.

Those who are familiar with the history of the battle of King's mountain, on the line between the Carolinas—the battle which, as was claimed at the time, turned the tide of the Revolution in favor of the Colonial arms—will remember the name of William Campbell, the senior officer in command on that occasion. He was a citizen of this county, and was the grandfather of the Hon. William C. Preston, formerly Senator in Congress from South Carolina, as also of the present General John T. Preston of Richmond, of the first wife of General Wade Hampton, of Mrs. General Floyd, of the wives of Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge, Governor McDowell and General Carrington. A large portion of the gallant men who followed General Campbell to

that last bloody but victorious field of the Revolution, followed him in their hunting shirts and moccasins, and with their long, flint-lock rifles, were from this county—the “Mountains of West Augusta”—and their names are preserved in its archives.

The writer will here give an incident illustrating the patriotism and daring of General Campbell and his men prior to their march to King’s mountain. There is a beautiful little valley known by the name of “Black Lick,” nestled among the mountains of Wythe county, which, being remote from the highways and environed by uninhabited forests, afforded shelter for a number of Tories, who made frequent forays upon the neighboring settlements, and then concealed themselves in this remote and quiet retreat. Their hiding-place becoming discovered, General Campbell’s men surrounded it and captured about a dozen, and hung them upon two whiteoaks, which were still standing a few years ago, spared by the woodman’s ax for the righteous office they had performed, and were long known by the name of the “Tory trees.”

Abingdon, although more than one hundred miles west of the Alleghanies, is one of the oldest towns in the State, and is entitled to some notoriety as the birth-place of several distinguished men. Washington county, therefore, as well as Abingdon, will have some claims upon future historians, if the “rebellious” nature of the present generation has not obliterated the glorious deeds of their fathers, as some of the claimants of “high moral ideas” sometimes sneeringly intimate.

Abingdon, remote and modest as it is, has furnished the Old Dominion with three Governors, to wit: Messrs. Wyndham Robertson, David Campbell and John B. Floyd—all of whom acquitted themselves with fidelity and honor, and retired from the station with the confidence and esteem of the people. The first of the honored trio still lives among us—the others have been gathered to their fathers—and if great and good men should again be called to the councils of the nation, Wyndham Robertson is still in the vigor of intellect, and has the head and the heart to “render the State some service.” (But right here the writer will venture to express the opinion in parenthesis, that he has but little hope that our rapidly declining Republican institutions will ever again be presided over by a man of expansive mind and capacious heart.)

CHAPTER XIX.

GENERAL CAMPBELL'S ADVENTURE WITH A DARING TORY.

The preceding chapter gives some account of General William Campbell, who was a very prominent patriot in this part of Virginia before and during the Revolution. When that long struggle commenced, he was living at Aspinville, near the Seven-Mile Ford, now owned by his great grandson, Mr. Charles Preston. At the time of the event to be related in this chapter, he was Lieutenant-Colonel of the county, and had, for the purpose of detecting Tories, given notice that all citizens were required to appear before him within a specified period to take the oath of allegiance to the young Republic. This incensed the few Tories then living near him to such a degree that they stole his horses, destroyed his property, and committed all sorts of depredations upon him whenever an opportunity occurred; and one of them, whose name the writer has heard, but has forgotten, bolder and more desperate than the rest, went so far as to openly declare that he would take a good horse wherever he could find it, and was supposed to be the author of certain written notices that had been posted through the neighborhood, warning General Campbell that, if he didn't desist from his persecution of the loyal adherents of George the Third, a terrible calamity would befall him, either in the loss of his property or his life.

On a quiet and beautiful Sabbath in the spring-time of the year 1780, General Campbell, accompanied by his wife (who, by the way, was the sister of Patrick Henry) and several of their neighbors, attended religious services at a Presbyterian house of worship which stood near the residence of the late Captain James P. Strother, known as the Meek Place, in the upper end of this county. As they were returning to their homes, they happened to be conversing about the audacity of the Tory who had been so bold and defiant in his declarations, and suspected of having posted the notices above referred to; and just as they arrived at the top of the hill, a short distance west of the present residence of Colonel Hiram A. Greever, they observed a man on horseback on the opposite hill coming towards them. General Campbell was riding beside his wife, with an infant on before him. One of the company remarked that the individual meeting them was the Tory of whom they had been speaking, probably now on a horse-stealing expedition, as he was observed to be carrying a rope halter in his hand. Hearing this, General Campbell, without halting, handed the infant over to its mother, and dashed out in front. Seeing this movement, and recognizing the man he so much feared and hated, the Tory wheeled his horse and started back at quite a rapid gait, pursued at full speed by General Campbell and one of the gentlemen in company, whose name was Thompson. Never, it may be presumed, either before or since, has such a dashing and exciting race been witnessed upon that long level between the residences of Colonels Greever and Beattie. As they reached the branch at the base of the hill a little

west of Colonel Beattie's, General Campbell dashed up alongside of the fleeing Tory, who, seeing that he would be caught, turned short to the right down the branch and plunged into the river. As he struck the water, General Campbell, who had left his companions in the rear, leaped in beside him, grasped the Tory's holsters and threw them into the stream, and then dragged him from his horse into the water.

At this moment Mr. Thompson rode up, when they took their prisoner out on the bank, and held what may be termed a drum-head court. The Tory, bad as he was, had the virtue of being a brave, candid man, at once acknowledged the truth of the charges preferred against him, and boldly declared his defiance and determination to take horses wherever he could find them. But he was mistaken in his man, for in less than ten minutes he was dangling by the halter he carried from the limb of a large sycamore that stood upon the bank of the river, the stump of which was still to be seen a few years ago, and may be there yet for aught the writer knows to the contrary.

This is the stuff the men of King's mountain were made of, and to further illustrate their spirit and determination, it may not be inappropriate to relate an incident that occurred in the life of Squire John McCulloch, who lived and died on the farm now owned by the heirs of A. R. Mallicote, Esq., and whose father fell by his side in that terrible battle. Many years ago the late General Francis Preston, who married the only child of General Campbell sent his son Thomas, then a lad of some fifteen years, to Squire McCulloch, to ask him to write out such incidents

of this battle as might have made an impression on his mind. He very cheerfully complied, and as he handed the youth his written statement, the latter, like most boys of his age, loved to hear stories of march and battle, and asked him if he didn't feel frightened when he heard the bullets whistling around his head, and saw the gleam of the British bayonets as Ferguson's Regulars dashed down the mountain-side toward them. The old gentleman replied: "Well, Tom, I don't remember exactly how I felt, but if I wasn't frightened, I was mightily excited. I kept my bullets in my mouth so as to load quick, and when the fight was over there was one left, and I had *chawed* it till it was as flat as a ninepence. I don't know whether it was fear or excitement—may be, a little of both."

CHAPTER XX.

SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA—ITS TOPOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES.

Southwestern Virginia comprises all that portion of the State running down, wedge-shaped, between Kentucky on the north and North Carolina and Tennessee on the south, and reaching from the Alleghanies in the east to Cumberland Gap in the west. This area is some two hundred and thirty miles in length, with an average width of about one hundred miles, and embraces fifteen counties, beginning at the Alleghany, as follows: Montgomery, Pulaski, Giles, Carroll, Grayson, Bland, Wythe, Tazewell, Buchanan, Smyth, Washington, Russell, Wise, Scott and Lee. Of these counties, Carroll, Grayson and Washington join North Carolina; Washington, Scott and Lee join Tennessee; and Buchanan, Wise and Lee join Kentucky. Montgomery, Pulaski, Giles, Grayson and Wythe are in what is known as the Valley of New River; Smyth and Washington in the Valley of Holston; Russell and Scott in the Valley of Clinch, and Lee in Powell's Valley. The balance are peculiarly mountain counties, interspersed with irregular hills and narrow valleys. It may be more correct to say that the several valleys named are in the counties, and not the counties in the valleys, for the reason that the counties are much larger than the portions of the valleys that traverse them.

The Old Dominion, taken all together—Tidewater,

Piedmont and Transmountain—is an empire within itself, embracing all temperatures, from the semi-torrid of Cape Henry to the semi-frigid of Mount Airy, and the fruits of all climates, from the figs and oranges of one extreme to the hard and acrid productions of the other.

Southwestern Virginia, except in climate and fruits, is also an empire of smaller dimensions—an empire in all the natural resources that any people could or ought to desire to make them independent, prosperous and happy. Take the counties of Montgomery and Pulaski, for instance, and they have water-power sufficient to propel all the machinery in half the States, and coal-fields broad enough to supply the population of half the Union with fuel. The mountains of Carroll and Grayson are pregnant with copper and iron, the outcroppings of which are seen all over their rugged sides. Wythe is rich in iron, coal and lead; Smyth and Washington need only adequate transportation to glut half the markets of the country with salt and gypsum; and Wise, Russell, Scott and Lee have any quantity of superior coal, and the blus-grass of Tazewell, Bland and Buchanan would fatten the cattle on a thousand hills. In a word, every county in the limits named has coal and iron in abundance, and most of them a great variety of other valuable deposits.

With rare exceptions this whole country abounds with limestone, and much of it of that desirable character that is constantly decomposing and keeping the soil perpetually fertile. It is also inferior to no section of the Union, of the same extent, for grass, and hence peculiarly adapted to stock-raising, wool-growing and grazing generally, and

the whole of it magnificently watered and wooded. No country under the sun is blessed with a more genial summer climate, purer water or grander scenery.

The foregoing is the merest outline of Southwestern Virginia as a whole, and the remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a more minute description of Washington county. It is comprised within an area of about six hundred square miles, with a population of from eighteen to twenty thousand. It is drained by three streams denominated rivers, running from east to west, with innumerable smaller streams running at right angles with and into the three larger. The rivers are the three several forks of the Holston, which, coming together in Tennessee, some five or six miles west of the State line, form the Holston, which, after the confluence of a much smaller stream twenty miles below Knoxville, loses its name and takes that of "Tennessee," and becomes a broad and beautiful river before its waters mingle with those of the Ohio at Paducah, Kentucky.

Washington county is belted from east to west by a succession of ridges and valleys. Its southern border is the Iron, or more properly Holston mountain, and its Northern Clinch mountain. These are about twenty miles apart, and between them are six regular ranges of hills, with as many valleys. The middle range is called Walker's mountain, at the southern base of which is the broadest and richest valley, in which Abingdon is located, and along which the Virginia and Tennessee railroad winds its serpentine way. Walker's mountain divides the waters, those rising on the north side flowing into the North Fork

of Holston, and those on the south side into the Middle and South Forks.

It is said above that all the smaller streams flow at right angles with the three larger, and hence transversely with all the ridges and valleys. It is a remarkable feature that not one of them flows along the valleys or parallel with the ridges, but dash straight across, seeming to have worn gaps for themselves through interposing barriers. Their name is legion. It may be taken for granted, therefore, that this county is most bountifully watered, and there is scarcely a farm without a spring or running stream of some sort, and the writer is acquainted with one of six hundred acres within five miles of Abingdon, that has upon it *sixty-five* pure, bold, never-failing springs.

It must not be understood that, because the country is scarred and belted by so many ridges, that it is not arable. On the contrary, a very large proportion of it is arable, the virgin soil of the hills being equal to that of the valleys, and either of them equal, at least, to the soil of any other part of the Commonwealth. Many of the hills are of course too steep to till conveniently, but as grass springs spontaneously wherever the undergrowth is removed, they are among the most valuable grazing lands.

Another peculiarity of the country is, that there are but few gullies or old-field pines, and it would be about as easy to find a kangaroo as a tick, though Dr. Franklin said, when he traveled through the State in its early settlement, that he saw little else than "hogs, dogs, fleas and democrats," and these are still indigenous and abundant.

Nature has done a great deal for Southwestern Virginia, and art and enterprise but very little. Although iron ore abounds in every part of it, but few have made the manufacture of iron a success. Want of capital, perhaps, may have been one reason for the failure to make it pay. There can now be no reason, surely, with the redundancy of timber, coal, water-power, and cheap labor, why the iron business should not make millionaires and nabobs in Virginia as well as in Maryland and Pennsylvania, if managed in the same way.

But the pleasantest and quietest way to live well and gradually accumulate in this country, is by farming and grazing. Sparsely populated as it is, even small farmers may have the advantage of extensive ranges, and most of them, with this aid, can feed a greater number of cattle than a casual observer would suppose. This is mentioned for the benefit of young farmers in the older States who have not land of their own or the means to get it, and it will not require much calculation to demonstrate that it would be far more sensible to come here and purchase improved lands at from ten to twenty-five dollars per acre, than to slave on where lands no better cannot be bought at less than from fifty to one hundred dollars per acre. This proposition needs no argument, and the subject is left with those whom it may interest.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SOILS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY—PRODUCTS—ANCIENT AND MODERN MODE OF FARMING.

The soils of Washington county are of various qualities, but all lie upon a stratum of tough yellow or red clay, and hence wear well, are easily improved, retain fertilizers well, are adapted to all kinds of grasses, and but seldom wash. The best soils are upon north hill-sides and sugar-tree bottoms, which is a dark mould of alluvial appearance, and admirably adapted to the growth of corn and grass. Another variety is the gray or gravelly soil, better adapted to wheat, rye and tobacco. It is a characteristic of most of the ridges, that while the south side is of a lighter color and more or less gravelly, the north side is almost invariably a dark mould, covered with a heavy growth of weeds, very loose, exceedingly rich, and decidedly superior to other lands for corn and root crops. These hill-sides are a godsend to "sang-diggers," and abound with Indian turnips, mayapples, sweet and bitter sarsaparilla, rattle-weed, spikenard and *copper-head snakes*. There is no part of the county that is not naturally adapted to grass, and hence it is naturally fertile. So much for the character of the soil in a nut shell.

The productions of the county are all the cereals, grasses and roots, with respectable crops of tobacco. The staple is corn, though large crops of oats are raised. Being a stock-raising section, the most profitable crops are

of course corn, rye, oats and hay. Wheat is very uncertain, not "hitting," as it is termed, every year, but many think the failure may be traced to defective tillage rather than the rigors of winter or the ravages of insects. The corn crops rarely average more than twenty-five bushels per acre, though some farms yield forty to fifty. Take the county by and large, and one season with another, it is doubtful if the average is more than eight bushels per acre, yet the best farmers, in favorable seasons, make from twenty to thirty. Rye does somewhat better—only because it is hardier and better adapted to poor soil—and probably averages from ten to fifteen bushels per acre, and oats from twenty-five to forty. An ordinary crop of hay is about two tons, and if extra, three tons per acre, particularly the variety known as evergreen, which grows tall and thick upon ordinary land. Buckwheat rarely fails, and is of superior quality—and it may be said in passing that it makes the best whisky in the world. All root crops are prolific, and most of them yield generously in any of our soils, if properly planted and attended to.

And now, having very briefly alluded to the character and productions of our soils, the writer approaches the difficult and delicate part of the programme with misgivings and the fear that he may not be able to do it justice. He has reference to the former as well as present manner of farming. The last he hopes to be able to manage in some sort, but the first may command a power of imagination and force of language he very much fears he does not possess.

When the writer first made his home in these mountains, forty-odd years ago, many of the farmers prepared

the forest during the winter for the corn crop of the following spring. This they did by belting the heavy timber and chopping out the undergrowth. But little grubbing was done, and the roots were left in the ground to be torn up by the "bull-tongue," which was the first implement honored with the privilege of preparing the virgin soil for a crop. Often might be seen in one of these "clearings" a sovereign with his mule and bull-tongue, toiling, swearing and sweating, as his rude implement, striking a hidden root, would toss him into the air, make him dance as many jigs, as a pair of frozen breeches on a clothes-line and throw his mule backward on his beam-ends as suddenly as if he had met a thunderbolt in his way. Such farmers, however, managed to worry along by scratching the earth about as deep as a turkey hen would in search of food for her brood, raise a family of eight or ten white-headed, bare-footed, long-shirted children, and about as many dogs, produce a crop of stalks fifteen feet high and about as big as pipe-stems, with ears standing as straight up as those of a rabbit, and about the size of a dipped tallow candle. The same ground, if properly cleared and cultivated, would have produced from forty to fifty bushels per acre.

Another class, who had gone through a like experience years before, had quit clearing, but were still cultivating corn in the same ground in which they had been raising it for a score of years consecutively, and when at last mother earth became indignant at such ruinous treatment, and refused to respond, they would conclude to "rotate" with wheat or rye, which was sown broadcast among the standing stalks, shoveled in with the same everlasting mule

and bull-tongue, and then left to take its chances. The consequence was, if it didn't freeze out they would have enough to make a few cakes and pies for Christmas, but if it did, they only had their "trouble for their pains," didn't let on that they eared a copper, and lived on in hope.

The writer has known some men—and by the way there are "a few of the same sort left"—who raised large families in log cabins twelve to sixteen feet square, by cultivating from five to a dozen acres of corn on steep hill-sides with nothing upon earth but a hoe. Corn was all they cared about cultivating, with a few beans, Shanghai cabbage and pumpkins, the latter kept from rolling away by being scotched on the lower side with a chunk or a stone. The rifle kept them in meat, and the ax felled the bee-tree and filled their gourds with honey. There never was a happier people than these dwellers upon the hill-sides, who seemed to have no concern beyond the present moment. They would toil at the hoe-handle all day long—both male and female—dance the livelong night on a puncheon floor by the light of a pine-knot, and it was no uncommon thing to hear a robust rosy-cheeked wood-nymph exclaim at one of their happy frolics: "Here, Sal, hold my baby while I run a reel with this strange feller!"

The foregoing are imperfect outlines of farming and living in the hills forty-odd years ago, but great changes have taken place, although most of the farmers are still behind the march of improvement and try to cultivate too much land. Were they to limit themselves to half the usual quantity, they would very nearly double the yield with half the labor, and improve instead of exhaust their lands.

The most successful farmers in this country are those who have circumscribed their operations and adopted the rotation system. The best farmer with whom the writer is acquainted, turns under the sward of the third year in the fall, plowing deep and subsoiling. In the spring he replows and harrows, checks four feet, plants as early in April as the season will allow, and works his corn (two stalks to the hill) four times before and once after harvest. As soon as it is sufficiently matured it is cut up and shocked, the ground again plowed and harrowed, the wheat sown with a drill, and, before the first freeze comes, well rolled. The next fall it is again put in wheat and grass, or allowed to rest till the following spring and then sown in oats and grass, and not cultivated again for three or four years. During the cultivation, the corn, when some six inches high, is primed with plaster, salt and plaster are sown on the wheat, and plaster upon the grass the spring following, more especially if it be clover. This course has acted like a charm on the farm alluded to, which, from being one of the poorest in the county a dozen years ago, is now one of the richest.

The writer has thus given specimens of the worst and best farming in this part of the country, and enough, he imagines, to give the reader a partial glimpse as to what sort of a country and what manner of people we have away out here two thousand feet above tidewater and five hundred miles from the sea—a country where fruits and flowers grow spontaneously, where the people are honest, intelligent and generous, where contagious epidemics and malaries never come, and where all who choose may always have enough to eat and to wear.

CHAPTER XXII.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SALTWORKS OF SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA—THEIR MANAGEMENT, REVENUES, ETC.

The writer hopes he may be able to invest the subject of this chapter with some interest to that portion of his readers who may have a fondness for studying out and contemplating the wondrous prodigality of Nature in filling the earth with treasures, hidden and revealed, and the grand design of the Maker and Builder of the universe in the equitable and impartial distribution of His blessings among the dwellers upon His footstool.

Without taking a wider or more comprehensive range, this can be abundantly illustrated by the valuable deposits in the hills and valleys of this mountain region, to which it was almost impossible in its earlier settlement to transport many of the prime and indispensable necessities of life. For instance, the first settlers could not do without iron, and to have hauled it across the mountains would have made it almost as valuable as gold, thus placing it beyond the reach of the pioneer. So with regard to lead, and salt, and gypsum, and lime, and many other articles of difficult and costly transportation. Hence the provisions of Providence have placed all these within the means and reach of these people. These provisions are not all the manifestations of His wisdom and His benevo-

lence toward His erring and wayward children, if the writer may be allowed to moralize a little before settling down on the salt subject. We see the equal distribution of God's blessings in all things and everywhere. In the tropics, beneath the gorgeous flower that lades the passing zephyr with its fragrance, lurks the most venomous reptile. The bird of sweetest song and most brilliant plumage sports upon the shrub that exhales the deadliest poison. So here, in this mountain-girt region, where, to some extent, the people are denied some of the higher order of luxuries, the earth is pregnant with all that is absolutely necessary to their comfort and prosperity. If they cannot pluck oranges and pineapples, they are not subject to the miasmas of the everglades—if they cannot feast upon melons and oysters, they have not the chills and fevers of the seaboard.

But to the subject. The Saltworks are sixteen miles northeast of Abingdon, and so near the line dividing the counties of Washington and Smyth, that the two principal wells, one in each county, are not more than twenty paces apart. These Saltworks are situated in an exceedingly fertile valley, embracing some three hundred acres, entirely surrounded by hills—some of them very high and precipitous. They form a natural amphitheatre, and from innumerable indications, this valley, or hopper-like depression in the hills, is supposed to have been a lake at some period in the world's history. Some thirty-eight years ago the writer was acquainted with several aged persons who had known the place anterior to the discovery of the subterranean saline stream from which the salt is now

manufactured, and when the valley was an immense "lick," frequented by herds of elk, buffalo, and other herbivorous animals. Before the time, however, of the old persons referred to, salt had been manufactured around what might have been the margin of the lake, perhaps by the aborigines, and in the first settlement of the country persons came considerable distances with their sleds and kettles, and made a sufficiency of salt in their simple way for their own consumption.

That this beautiful little valley of three hundred acres was once a lake, is evident, not only from the deep alluvial soil, but from the fossils and petrifications found there from time to time below the surface. During the construction of the railroad to the works in 1856, many large bones were found in an excavation, among which were the limbs of an animal much larger than those of an elephant. Several of these limbs were found, together with a jaw-bone and several teeth, some of the latter weighing several pounds—all found some six or eight feet below the surface.

Near the close of the last century, William King, a native of the Emerald isle, made the first successful experiment in digging for salt water at this lick. The larger portion of the lick belonged to an old English survey, and joined the possessions of General Russell, coming to him through his wife, who had been the wife and widow of General William Campbell. Mr. King had been a pedler, and in his perigrinations through the country, had observed and examined the salt which had been formed upon the surface by evaporation. Reflecting upon this, he reasoned himself to the conclusion that there must be a subterra-

near saline stream, and doubting his own pecuniary ability to purchase the land and experiment, he tried to persuade General Russell to do so. The latter, not being able to see as far and as hopefully into the earth as the former, declined, particularly as he already had thousands of acres of unproductive lands under onerous taxation. Mr. King could not shake off the conviction that there was an immense fortune for somebody under the surface of that bog, and he determined to risk the investment, even though he should lose the accumulations of years of toil. Having some means to spare, he purchased a small boundary (some fifty acres), at a nominal price, which had previously been offered for a pony and rifle gun, for which he paid at least half a dozen times, to as many individuals who fabricated claims. He preferred this to the trouble and expense of law suits.

After suitable preparation he commenced digging, and cribbing the shaft as the work progressed. He employed several hands, and worked on, day after day, and to the depth of one hundred and ninety feet, and still no water. With his faith still strong and unwavering, he determined to prosecute the work, but just at this point, the hands going to work one morning discovered that the bottom of the well had fallen out during the night, and that the brine had risen nearly to the top. This being communicated to Mr. King, who was living in Abingdon, he knew that his fortune was made, and forthwith prepared his furnaces for evaporation. From that day to this there has been no perceptible diminution of the water, yielding, it is estimated, ninety-five per cent. of the whitest, purest and finest salt

manufactured anywhere in the United States. It is even finer than the Liverpool article, and took the first premium at a New York State Fair some few years ago. While it takes seventy gallons of the Kanawha brine, and forty of the Onondaque, it requires only twenty gallons from the King wells to make one bushel of salt.

Mr. King did not live many years to enjoy his good fortune, but long enough to become immensely wealthy, and to do a vast amount of good by his benevolence, liberality and enterprise. Had he lived to be three-score and ten, he would have been the richest man on the American continent. He died in 1808 at the age of thirty-eight years, and then owned not only the Saltworks unincumbered, but a vast amount of real estate in Abingdon and Washington county, with forty-odd mercantile establishments at all the more prominent points between Baltimore and Nashville. He married Miss Mary Trigg, who having no issue, he bequeathed his property to William King, his nephew, provided he married a daughter of his brother-in-law, William Trigg, or to a son of William Trigg, provided he married a daughter of his brother James King. As the stipulation could not or was not complied with, the property reverted to his heirs-at-law, whose name was legion—for what rich man ever yet died intestate without a multitude of heirs!

General Russell having also died, and his property adjoining having descended to the heirs of his wife—General Preston and his family—they sunk a well into the same hidden stream or lake, and both wells are still in use, and though pumped by engines, the water has never been

known to diminish. The combined property is now valued at from one to two million dollars, and is probably worth a great deal more—indeed, its value can scarcely be estimated. Most of the heirs having parted with their interests, it belongs, principally, to three gentlemen, who were comparatively poor a few years ago, but who are now millionaires, and have added thousands of acres to the original estates. And what is better, they are liberal, public-spirited gentlemen, who seem to have acquired the philanthropy and benevolence of Mr. King with his estate. The reader may arrive at some estimate of the estate when he is informed that it comprises some ten to twelve thousand acres of land, much of it equal to the Mississippi bottoms, the inexhaustible supply of brine, from which is manufactured from two to three thousand bushels of salt per day, and which could be increased to almost any amount—it having been made during the war, when the works supplied the whole Confederacy, from the Potomac to the Mississippi, at the rate of ten thousand bushels per day, or between three and four million per year, without perceptible diminution in quantity or quality. The manufacture costs less than twenty cents per bushel, and having no competition, sells at the works at eighty cents per bushel.

In addition to the salt wells, the estate has upon it inexhaustible deposits of plaster, for all of which, both salt and plaster, there is a ready market, with railroad transportation within a few feet of the wells and banks.

With this mere outline, together with what has been intimated in preceding chapters of the resources of this highly favored corner of the Old Dominion—and the half

has not yet been told—all must conclude that God in his providence has lavished his bounties upon Southwestern Virginia with a liberal hand, and that the people thereof ought to be grateful, prosperous and happy. The truth is, they have lived too easily, and hence too negligently, but the war has taught them a lesson which will profit the more prudent, and result, it may be hoped, in a fuller development of their hidden wealth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A JAUNT INTO TAZEWELL COUNTY, WITH A DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF ITS ROMANTIC SCENES AND NATURAL CURIOSITIES.

In August, 1871, the writer of these pages, in company with Mr. R. E. Brunett, of Petersburg, started from Abingdon to visit Tazewell county, one of the richest as well as one of the most wildly beautiful and romantic in this end of the State. We went by way of the Saltworks, whose hundreds of boiling cauldrons were turning out three thousand bushels of salt per day. Passing on a mile, we were at Mr. Palmer's cheese factory, where one hundred and fifty cows supply the material. In another mile we were on the battle-ground, where the Federal General Burbridge, in the third year of the war, left a regiment of negroes on the field by placing them in front, and where two thousand five hundred old men and boys whipped and chased into Kentucky five thousand Michiganders and "loyal" Tennesseans. Here we forded the North Fork of Holston up to our saddle-skirts, and keeping up stream half a dozen miles, brought us to the gap in Poor Valley mountain, through which dashes and tumbles the madly-rushing Laurel, between jagged precipices at least one thousand feet high, and so narrow that a man can throw a stone across the chasm. A narrow valley separates this from Flat Top, crossing which, and then Clinch mountain, which are as near together as two mountains can be, a few miles farther

on brought us to the residence of General Rees T. Bowen, in Tazewell, where we were welcomed with a hospitality so genial and generous as to make us feel perfectly at home. Here we sojourned from Saturday afternoon till late in the day on Monday examining and admiring the wonderful freaks of nature and of art with which that locality so richly abounds. The General owns three thousand acres in what is called the Cove, a rich alluvial plain, famous for its fertility and romantic beauty. Such is the character of the blue-grass, even to the summits of the mountains, that cattle keep in fine order without other food all through the winter, except on rare occasions when the grass is covered with snow.

Upon this place are found those strangely painted rocks, which have been a wonder and a mystery to all who have seen them. The grandfather of General Bowen settled the Cove in 1766—one hundred and ten years ago—and the paintings were there then, and are as brilliant to-day as they were when first seen by a white man. They consist of horses, elk, deer, wolves, bows and arrows, eagles, Indians, and various other devices. The mountain upon which these rocks are based is about one thousand feet high, and they lay in a horizontal line about half-way up, and are perhaps seventy-five feet broad upon their perpendicular face. When it is remembered that the rock is hard, with a smooth white surface, incapable of absorbing paint, it is a mystery how the coloring has remained undimmed under the peltings of the elements for how much longer than a hundred years no one can tell. This paint is found near the rocks, and General Bowen informed the

writer that his grandmother used it for dyeing linsey, and it was a fadeless color. As there was a battle fought on a neighboring mountain between 1740 and 1750, between the Cherokees and Shawnees, for the possession of a buffalo lick, the remains of the rude fortifications being still visible, it is supposed the paintings were hieroglyphics, conveying such intelligence to the red man as we now communicate to each other through newspapers. It was a perilous adventure to stand upon a narrow inclined ledge, without a shrub or a root to hold to, with from fifty to seventy-five feet of sheer perpendicular descent below to a bed of jagged boulders and the home of innumerable rattlesnakes, *but I didn't make it!* I crawled far enough along that narrow, slanting ledge, with my fingers inserted in the crevices of the rocks, to see most of the paintings, and then "coon'd" it back with equal care and caution.

Another great curiosity upon the premises of General Bowen is the magnificent spring near his residence, affording sufficient water to supply the teeming millions of the Empire city. It is known far and near by the name of "Maiden Spring," from the circumstance of his ancestor, who first settled the Cove, having killed a doe while slaking its thirst at this remarkable fountain. The spring affords an immense volume of pure, cold, clear water, and is evidently a subterranean river that finds its way into the outer world from the mouth of a cavern under a high and rugged cliff of rocks, thickly covered with trees and wild vines. The rush of the water is so great and rapid, that its roar can be heard at a considerable distance. It affords ample water-power for any amount or character of machinery.

Within three-fourths of a mile of this spring, and upon the same premises, boils up the *second section* of the South Fork of Clinch river. This stream has its source in a number of springs several miles eastward, and after winding and tumbling among the hills for some distance, entirely disappears, running several miles underground, till it boils up again in the cove, as above stated, which forms, as the writer has termed it, the second section of a river. It is a broad, rapid stream from the spot where it reappears, and General Bowen informed us that such is the force with which it comes to the surface, that it is difficult for a man to force his foot into the aperture.

We visited many other places of interest on the General's premises, such as subterranean springs, deep, dark caverns, and very reluctantly left his hospitable roof and pleasant family late in the afternoon, and after a warm ride of a dozen miles along a rich but narrow valley, bordered by high mountains on either side not more than half a mile apart, we arrived at Jeffersonville, the county town of Tazewell, with a population of about six hundred, and situated on a gentle eminence, with rich and romantic surroundings. Immediately opposite the town, and but little more than a mile from it, and covered with bluegrass to its very summit, rises a rock-crowned peak in Rich mountain, easily accessible on horse-back, fifteen hundred and seventy feet above the level of the street.

We remained in Jeffersonville till the afternoon of the next day, enjoying the splendid scenery, and for the purpose of affording my companion an opportunity of examining the records and ascertaining the whereabouts and

boundaries of a tract of land among the mountains upon which he held a claim. His search was unsuccessful, for instead of finding the farm of somebody else on top of his, he found his on top of everybody's else—upon the very “topmost towering height” of “Cucumber Ridge,” in McDowell county, West Virginia, in an immense pile of rocks, with here and there a stunted laurel, where the roots could struggle for enough into the fissures to hold it upright. Such, at least, was the information he obtained. We then started for Burk's Garden, in the eastern end of the county. Half way there we passed, almost imperceptibly, over the ridge that divides the waters of the Tennessee and the Kanawha, those on the west side flowing into Clinch, and those on the east side into New River—running in directly opposite directions for hundreds of miles, and then uniting in the Ohio. At the western base of the ridge we drank out of the head-spring of Clinch river, a cold, bold fountain, in which my companion had a fight with a very large water-moccasin, without material injury to either combatant. A mile or two farther on we came to the base of Rich mountain, which is crossed by a winding turnpike some five miles over. The mountain at this crossing is heavily timbered, many of the trees being cucumber, a species of domestic magnolia, which were peculiarly rich at that season, with their clusters of crimson fruit and dark green foliage.

About the middle of the afternoon we descended the opposite side into a sharp, narrow valley, with the gap or gate-way opening into Burk's Garden in plain view, three-fourths of a mile from and five hundred feet above

us. This gap looked to the writer like a curf that might have been chopped by all the men in the world put into one man, and with an ax with all the axes in the world put into one ax. The writer regards Burk's Garden as the grandest spot of earth his eyes have ever beheld. It is ten miles long and five wide, with a turnpike running straight across it through the centre. Knowing no one, we rode on to one of the two stores and the most public place in it, and although there were several gentlemen present, they all seemed to be so busy buying and selling that they had no time to answer our seemingly unimportant questions in more than monosyllables, particularly after having learned that we were not in the cattle trade. After resting awhile we remounted, and concluded to go farther even if it should be our luck to fare worse. The sun was still some distance above the horizon, and as the tall trees made long shadows under the standing rays, tinging the tops of the opposite mountain with its softened light, the scene was indescribably grand, and we thought it no wonder that the old pioneer Burk, when his vision first fell upon that valley hung like an eagle's nest among the mountains, exclaimed, "surely I have found my way into the garden of Eden!"

We continued to ride on leisurely, seemingly without purpose or destination, but rapt in admiration of all that met the view—tall timber, green fields, fruitful orchards, sparkling rivulets, fat cattle, tasty homesteads—till we reached the farther or northern boundary, where we began to cast about for shelter for the night, more especially as ominous looking clouds were looming up in the distance,

accompanied by flows of wind and scattered rain drops. Seeing a neat little farm-house hard by, surrounded by rich fruits and green pastures, we rode up and were met at the gate by a pleasant-looking young gentleman, who, on being told who we were, and what our mission, threw open his doors and his heart, and gave us one of those generous welcomes which we have never seen more warm and unostentatious than in Tazewell county. We were at the residence of Mr. H. H. McGinnis, who had but recently commenced house-keeping, and although we felt that we were improperly intruding upon new beginners, the kind and hospitable attentions of his pleasant lady and himself, made us feel at home and forget that we were strangers.

The peregrinations of the past few days having wearied us somewhat, we did not rise next morning as early as usual, but in ample time to see Old Sol lift himself over the eastern barrier, and strangely and gorgeously light up with golden tints the foliage, flowers and magnificent meadows of that beautiful valley. A comfortable night's rest and an excellent breakfast prepared us for another day of wandering and observation, and bidding adieu to our kind entertainers, we started out to see more of the spot upon which nature seems to have concentrated the sum total of her bounties. Coming to a large gate that had whiteoak trees for posts, and seeing a large herd of cattle up to their eyes in blue-grass, in an inclosure of hundreds of acres, we turned in, and finding a path leading eastward, we followed it several miles, passing through a number of gates between fields and plantations. We at length

found ourselves upon the splendid estate that once belonged to the Floyd family, and where, a few years ago, a white-oak spread its broad shade, the trunk of which measured fully nine feet in diameter, and near which we drank from a spring one hundred and twenty feet in circumference, the bottom of which has never been sounded.

After riding about for several hours among the green pastures and noble old forest trees, we made our way back to the road, and were shown the spot, near the centre of the garden, where Burk lighted his first camp-fire and spent his first night in his new-found Eden, marked by a splendid spring and the stump of an old sugar-tree. Passing on a mile or two more brought us to the residence of Mr. Litz, in the western end, whose son accompanied the writer to the top of the mountain at the extreme western limit, while his companion remained to rest his jaded horse, where a magnificent view of the whole area is obtained. The Garden, including the arable mountain-sides, contains some fifty thousand acres, about one-ninth of which belongs to two individuals—Messrs. Lawson and Meek. We learned from the census-taker, whom we met on his mission, that it embraces one hundred and fifty families and one thousand seven hundred inhabitants. Although it is apparently level, the streams all flow with considerable rapidity, and converge toward the gap, where they form a large creek, that goes leaping and bellowing down the steep rocky mountain-side with wild and fearful velocity, falling five hundred feet in the first half-mile of its course.

After enjoying a comfortable family dinner with Mr.

Litz, we turned our horses' heads westward, and night found us at the residence of Mr. James S. Witten, four miles west of Jeffersonville, where we met with a cordial welcome, a pleasant and happy family, and a houseful of pretty young ladies, most of whom had gathered in from the neighborhood. Mr. Witten, like General Bowen, is one of those whole-souled gentlemen who seem to feel honored by a call, whose hospitalities are as free and as boundless as the breezes of their native hills, and whose houses, omnibus-like, however full, always have room for one more. After chatting till a late hour with the old folks, while the hours with Mr. Brunett flew past as if on angels' wing in the parlor, we retired to a comfortable room and were soon oblivious to all earth's joys and sorrows.

The next morning was bright and balmy, but the clouds hanging lazily on the sides of the mountains gave indication of coming rain. When we spoke of starting homeward, Mr. Witten informed us that we couldn't do that thing that day, but must remain at least one day longer, if not a week. We were too polite to be rude, and too sumptuously entertained to desire a change, and of course cheerfully consented to postpone our departure. For my part I was gratified that we did, for I visited a mountain that day—Morris' Knob—that put me nearer heaven than I had ever been before, and my young companion was doubtless as near the same happy place as myself, as he remained behind enjoying the society of the ladies. In company with Mr. John Witten, the brother of our host, we ascended the highest peak in Rich mountain, said to be

the highest point in the State, and affording a grand and most extensive view. It is not as high from base to summit as White Top, but being in a section more elevated, it is higher above the level of the sea. The southern face of the summit is crowned with an immense square rock, itself said to be three hundred feet perpendicular. This rock seemingly overhangs a beautiful valley a mile or two away, and affords an unobstructed view, limited only by the scope of vision. On every hand, mountains piled on mountains meet the view. But for the fact that masses of cloud rested upon the mountains in the distance, I was informed that Pilot and Black mountains in North Carolina, as well as many peaks in the Blue Ridge, the Alleghanies and the Cumberland, would be plain to the naked eye. As it was, the scene was indescribably beautiful, and I shall never forget my admiration of the cabins on the green hillsides, seeming to hang among the foliage like nests of the Baltimore oriole. After spending an hour or more among the sharp and chilling winds, where millions of snow-birds build their habitations and rear their young, and the grey eagle makes his home, we came down through blue-grass knee-deep, and in less time than it takes me to tell it were broiling under a sun that had lifted the mercury up to ninety-four in the shade. A circle of a few miles brought us back to the residence of Mr. Witten, where the balance of the evening was spent by myself in listening to interesting narrations of Indian traditions, while my younger companion was still in clover in another apartment.

Taken altogether, the writer regards this as one of the most instructive and gratifying pleasure excursions he has ever taken, and doubts not that he lived fully nine years of solid enjoyment in those nine summer days and one hundred and fifty miles of mountain travel.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN INDIAN INCURSION AT ABINGDON, AND INCIDENTS IN PIONEER LIFE.

The writer of these sketches has given from time to time, in newspaper articles, narratives of the sufferings and vicissitudes of the early settlers of Southwestern Virginia, but as he contemplates the subject, incident after incident rises up before him, of greater or lesser magnitude, all combining to illustrate the propriety of putting them in such form as may secure their perpetuation in the history yet to be written of this interesting portion of the Old Dominion, more particularly when it is remembered that "nations only begin to look after the history of their founders, and search into their origin, when they have outlived the memory thereof."

A large majority of the dwellers upon our picturesque slopes and blooming valleys, have but little conception of the dangers and privations encountered and endured by the generation,—the dim shadows of which are vanishing like the tints in a dissolving scene,—who cleared the forest and opened out the rich and beautiful farms³ that are now spread out upon our hills and mountain sides and grassy plains. For instance, but few of the present inhabitants of Abingdon, now so tranquil and unstartled by threatened or anticipated calamity, are aware that the ground now occupied by our two flourishing female colleges was once

a dense chinquapin thicket, which, in the summer of 1776, concealed a band of painted warriors who made a savage attack on Black's Fort, which stood near the spot now occupied by Captain Findlay's mill, and that the face of the hill between Stonewall Jackson Institute and the railroad was the scene of a bloody battle. Nor are they aware that the Rev. Charles Cummings, who was the pastor of the congregation who worshipped in the church that stood in the old grave-yard, attended his appointments on the Sabbath with his shot-pouch and powder-horn slung around him and his rifle in his hand, while the brave men who assembled to enjoy the comforts and blessings of their holy religion, resembled more a company of modern militia, armed and equipped for action, than the pious men they were, who were not allowed to worship the Great Jehovah "under their own vine and fig-tree" without serious apprehensions of a lurking foe.

The writer is indebted to Colonel Abram Mangle, one of the oldest and most reliable citizens of the county, for an outline of the following incidents:

On one occasion in the year above referred to—1776—two men and three women were pulling flax near the fort, with Frederick Mangle stationed as a sentinel to give the alarm should Indians make their appearance. The enemy, who had concealed themselves in the chinquapin bushes above referred to, stealthily approached, wounded and scalped Mr. Mangle, but the persons in the flax-patch, by dodging from tree to tree, finally reached the fort in safety. The men in the fort sallying out, reinforced by a number in the vicinity who had heard the firing, attacked the

savages and drove them off with considerable loss. Mr. Mangle survived his injuries but a short time, and his relatives claim that his, and not Henry Creswell's, was the first grave in the old Sinking Spring cemetery.

But to proceed with the more prominent incidents the writer proposes to record. In 1778, a predatory party of Indians came in from the Rockcastle hills in Kentucky, and made their appearance at the cabin of Isaac Newland, on the North Fork of Holston, the place subsequently owned by Michael Fleenor, and still in possession of his descendants, some eight miles north of Abingdon. Mr. Newland and his son were at work in a clearing near by, with no one at the cabin but his wife and her infant. The Indians captured the mother and infant, burnt the cabin, and hurried away with their captives directly through the mountains toward Russel. The alarm being given, Jacob Mangle (father of Colonel Abram Mangle), being the nearest neighbor, gathered a company in as short a time as possible and took the trail, which had been plainly marked by Mrs. Newland, who had the presence of mind to break twigs by the way and leave other sign. After reaching the valley in which Lebanon is now situated, and fearing that the powder in their flint-locks had become dampened in passing through the thick undergrowth on the mountain, they discharged their guns for the purpose of reloading in order to make sure work should they overtake the savages, but it unfortunately so happened that the Indians had halted, and hearing the report of fire-arms took the alarm, murdered their victims and made their escape. A few minutes after, the pursuing party came to

where the mother and child were lying, the latter not quite dead. They brought them back to the settlement, Jacob Mangle carrying the infant, which died in his arms on the way.

The alarm having reached the little settlement at Abingdon, it produced great consternation and serious apprehensions as to what might befall the little community at Castle's Woods, as the Indians would probably return in that direction, it being in a line with their towns beyond the Cumberland. A young man living at Abingdon by the name of Douglass, a fearless and determined Indian fighter, proposed to cross the mountain to Castle's Woods, for the purpose of warning the settlers of the impending danger, and a young friend by the name of Benham volunteered to accompany him on the perilous journey, against the expostulations of their relatives and friends. Everybody in this country acquainted with the old road through Little Moccasin Gap, will remember the large, square, flat, table-like rock, some five or six feet high, which stood on the lower side of the old trace along the creek not far from opposite the little mill now on the new road in the gap, the noisy machinery of which sends strange echoes along the surrounding peaks in these days of piping peace and *corn-dodgers*. Douglass and Benham had reached that rock, and, as was the custom of most way-farers, as long as that old road was the highway through the gap, had probably halted to eat a snack. At this moment the report of a rifle was heard, when Douglass fell mortally wounded.

He at once told Benham that the shot was fatal, and urged him to dodge into the laurel bordering the stream,

make his escape to Castle's Woods and warn the settlers. Douglass saw the smoke of the rifle rise from a log between the stream and where the road now passes, and knowing that it was the habit of the Indian to lie still under such circumstances till the smoke cleared away, when he would cautiously raise his head to see the effect of his fire. He drew a bead upon the spot as he lay propped upon his elbow, and Benham afterward stated that he had not gone fifty yards when he heard the report of Douglass' rifle. Benham hurried on through the gap, reached Castle's Woods in safety and gave the alarm. A company returning a day or two after found the body of Douglass lying where Benham left him, with his scalp gone, and on examining the place where the smoke of the Indian rifle had been seen, blood and brains were found upon the log, showing that Douglass, at the instant he entered upon that journey from which no traveler returns, took an Indian with him on the solemn march. A grave was excavated among the rocks, on the road-side where he fell, in which his body was deposited, and still sleeps, amid the wildest and most romantic scenery of all our mountain gorges. It was the custom for each passer-by who knew the spot to drop a pebble upon the rude mound, to perpetuate the memory of the resting-place of the brave pioneer who sacrificed his life for the safety of others perhaps unknown to him, but the vandalism of modern change, instead of rearing a monument to his memory on the spot, wantonly changed the location of the road to avoid a slight elevation, and thus obliterated forever the little hillock that marked the receptacle of the ashes of the hero and martyr.

CHAPTER XXV.

A RACE FOR LIFE—INDIAN DEPREDACTIONS ON THE HOLSTON.

Visitors to this beautiful country, as well as many who inhabit it, are not aware, or rather do not reflect, that many of these green hills and picturesque valleys were once the scenes of frequent Indian cruelty and outrage. The writer proposes, as briefly as he can, to give an imperfect sketch of one of the last predatory incursions of the red men into the valley of Holston, as he has heard it related by more than one aged citizen. It occurred on the 7th day of April, 1794, on the North Fork of Holston, twenty-eight miles west of Abingdon.

This region of country—"the settlements of Holston," as it was called—was originally neutral ground among the tribes, uninhabited, and reserved as a common hunting range. The centre of this reservation was "Wolf Hills," where the spires of the town of Abingdon now glisten in the sunlight of an "*advanced civilization*." The fertility of the soil, the salubrity of the climate, the purity and abundance of water, and the value of the blue-grass, peavine and canebrake ranges, on bottom and upland alike, attracted immigration at an early period, and consequently at the time of the later Indian depredations, a number of settlers had erected their cabins and chopped out their clearings where now are to be seen broad fields and elegant mansions.

It is the purpose of the writer to speak more particularly of the incursion of 1794, and to refer, incidentally, to others of a later date and of less magnitude. That of '78 was led by Benge, a half-breed Shawnee, who was remarkable for his strength, activity, endurance and great speed as a runner. He was a man of more than savage intelligence also, as well as of great bravery and strategy, and had more than once approached the settlements so stealthily and by a route so secret, that he fell upon the scattered settlers without an intimation of his approach, and retired to his wigwams beyond the Cumberland without leaving a trace of the route he had traveled, though rangers were constantly on the lookout for his trail. One of these rangers of the Holston settlement was a man by the name of Cotterell, and the writer must make a digression to record an incident in his history. He was famous for his size, activity and handsome person. Benge and himself were rivals in manhood and wood-craft, each jealous of the other's prowess and courage, and both anxious for an occasion to meet in single combat. Not many months before Benge's last incursion, they met on top of Powell's mountain, in what is now Lee county, each with a band of followers. The Indians were in ambush, having observed the approach of the whites, who were not aware of their proximity, and Benge instructed his companions not to kill Cotterell, so that he himself might run him down and capture him. At the crack of the Indian rifles the two or three of Cotterell's companions fell, seeing which, and at once comprehending the folly of a combat with a dozen savages, he sprang away down the mountain-side

like an antelope, with Benge in close pursuit. Two miles away in the valley on Walling's creek was the cabin of a pioneer, in reaching which Cotterell knew was his only chance of escape. Having two hundred dollars in specie in a belt around him, he found he was carrying too much weight for a closely contested race, and that Benge was gaining on him. Making a desperate effort, however, he increased his speed a little, and as he leaped the fence that surrounded the cabin, Benge's tomahawk was buried in the top rail before Cotterell reached the ground. Benge, seeing that he had missed his aim, and not knowing how many men and rifles might be in the cabin, fled back to his companions sadly disappointed.

A few years after this Cotterell died on the North Fork in this county, and during the "wake," while his body lay in the cabin, an old comrade, who had been in many a hard pinch with him, thus gave utterance to his thoughts and feelings as he paced the puncheon floor in great sorrow: "Poor Cotterell, he is gone! He was a noble fellow after Ingins and varmints, and I hope he has gone to where there is as much game and as *desperate* good range as he had on Holston!"

But to return to the subject. Not a great while before Benge's last predatory incursion, 1794, a man by the name of Hobbs, almost, if not quite, the equal of Cotterell in prowess, bravery, activity and daring, and "some among Ingins," as the phrase had it, determined to discover the secret path by which Benge crossed Cumberland mountain and entered and retired from the settlements. He at length ascertained it to be one of two cattle paths crossing

the mountain midway between two gaps some few miles apart, through which the highways into Kentucky lay in those days. He at once organized a squad of mountaineers to meet him at a designated spot the moment it was known that Indians were in the settlements.

Time wore on, and all was pleasant and prosperous on the Holston. One bright morning in May, 1794, after the sun had risen and the men had gone to the clearings and the women were busy at their wheels and looms, all joyous and jovial amid the fragrance of wild flowers and the music of song-birds, and not dreaming of coming danger, Bengé and his painted warriors stealthily approached and surrounded the cabins of Peter Livingston. The writer will here give the narrative of the capture and massacre in the words of Mrs. Osborne, who was the daughter of Peter Livingston, was one of the captives, frequently heard the narrative from the lips of her parents, and is still living within sight of the spot where the outrage occurred :

When the party of Indians were first discovered by Mrs. Elizabeth Livingston, they were within a short distance of the house. Her attention was attracted by the barking of a dog, and seeing them, and knowing their evil design, she fastened the door to prevent their entrance, and awaited the attack. While they were trying to break open the door, she took down a rifle that was laying in the rack and fired among them, with what effect she never knew. The Indians then went to the kitchen, where they found three children, one white and two colored. They tomahawked these and left them for dead. The white child and one of the colored recovered. They then went to the

cabin of old Mrs. Sally Livingston, close by, and tomahawked her. She lived four days. After taking what provisions and household articles they wanted, they fired the house which Mrs. Elizabeth Livingston occupied, when she was forced to come out and surrender. Before doing so, however, she gave her infant to her little daughter, who escaped with it to the house of Mr. Russell, the nearest neighbor. This infant became the wife of Solomon Osborne, and furnishes, as before said, this narrative. The captives with which the Indians started to their towns were Mrs. Elizabeth Livingston, wife of Peter, Mrs. Susan Livingston, wife of Henry, and who had been married only three weeks, two colored men and one colored woman.

The alarm was soon given, and a party of men lead by a man by the name of Head started in pursuit, while Hobbs and his squad, having heard that the Indians had gone towards Holston, made their way to the designated place of meeting at the base of Cumberland mountain. Hobbs and his men having reached their destination several hours in advance of the Indians and the party following up the trail, he divided them into two parties, in order to guard the two paths, one or the other of which he was satisfied the savages would travel, each company to be stationed in line and in ambush within convenient range of the path. Hobbs himself chose to be with those who guarded the path he thought the Indians would be most likely to take, and after disposing of them in line, concealed by the undergrowth, he instructed them not to fire should the Indians come that way till he had given the signal, each man selecting his victim, so as not to waste

the second bullet on the same object. They were not kept long in suspense, after being disposed, before the red-skins were seen silently and cautiously wending their way with their captives up a long spur in single file, Benge in the lead, as was his invariable custom. Hobbs knowing his habit, had himself taken the farthest position, so that when the Indians should be opposite his line, Benge would be opposite him. Before Benge had advanced far enough to come within range of Hobb's rifle, one of the men, having become impatient, fired without waiting for the preconcerted signal. As no time was now to be lost, each white man selected his Indian and blazed away. At the crack of the rifles, and seeing that most of his followers had fallen or disappeared, Benge sprang off like a startled buck, leaving captives and all behind. Opposite Hobb's position was an opening in the timber, where the trunk of a large tree had fallen across the path, and he knew that his only chance to bring Benge to a *halt*, as he afterwards expressed it, was to wing him as he passed around the root of the tree into the narrow opening: He had but a moment to reflect, and as Benge at full speed darkened the opening, Hobbs drew a bead and fired, when Benge sprang into the air with a yell, and fell without a struggle or a groan.

That was the last of Benge, the half-breed Shawnee warrior, and the last Indian predatory incursion to the Holston settlements. Mr. Hobbs lived many years, became a pious and useful minister of the Methodist Church; and the Legislature, some years after, as a testimonial of its appreciation of his gallantry, voted him a handsome and costly silver-mounted rifle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A THRILLING NARRATIVE OF KATY SAGE, THE LOST CHILD OF GRAYSON.

The circumstances of the following narrative are most remarkable, certainly stranger than fiction, and involve more to touch the heart and enlist the kindlier emotions of our nature than anything the writer has been able to pick up in his long residence among the mountains.

On Elk creek, in Grayson county, Virginia, lived, in 1792, a young and happy family, consisting of James Sage, his wife and three or four small children. The morning of the 11th of April in that year was bright and balmy, the early wild flowers were bursting into bloom, the song-birds were trilling their melody in the budding forest, the bespangled trout were sporting in the crystal waters of the mountain stream, and all was peaceful and joyous around the cabin of the pioneer. The husband and father was preparing his clearing for the summer crop, and the wife and mother preparing for the day's washing. She had gone to the little stream near by to build a fire, leaving her little daughter Katy, then only five years old, chasing butterflies among the shrubs of the garden. After starting the fire, the mother returned to the cabin for the clothes she intended to wash, when she missed the child that had been seen sporting in the garden a short time before. After a diligent but fruitless search for some little distance around

the inclosure, she became alarmed and called her husband from the field, and they both sought the little one till night fell upon the scene, and still she could not be found. The weary hours of the night chased each other slowly on, and still the agonized parents heard no cheering answer to their continued calls. On the morrow the neighbors gathered in, the country at that time being very sparsely populated, but some fifty or sixty of them came together, and day after day and week after week they searched every cove, thicket, stream, cave and mountain-side, and still no tidings of the little wanderer.

At length all except the father gave up the search in despair, who continued it for months, passing over nearly every square yard of ground for miles around, with the melancholy hope that at least the remains or some indications of the fate of the lost one might be found, which would be more satisfactory than the agonizing suspense that hung about the hearts of the parents. In his wanderings he heard of the fame of an old woman known by the name of Granny Moses, who lived beyond the mountain in North Carolina, and who was believed by the settlers to possess the faculty of revealing all mysteries and foretelling future events. He sought her out and consulted her. After consulting her occult sciences, she informed him that the child was still living, but that he would never see or hear of her, though his wife, who would survive him, would hear from her child in her old age.

Time wore on, thirty-one years had passed, and in 1823 the father died, and still no tidings of the lost one. Time was still on the wing, and amid its changes and revolu-

tions and startling events, the mysterious disappearance of Katy Sage was unrevealed and almost forgotten. In the meantime the family became scattered—one of the sons settling in Lee county, Virginia; another in Missouri, and a third in Kansas. Years swept on, and in 1854 Charles Sage, who lived in Kansas, having business with the Government, visited the Indian Agency on the border of that Territory. On entering the office, he attracted the attention of the Agent, who asked him if he had a sister or other female relation among the Indians, stating that there was a white woman among the Shawnees, who sometimes visited the Agency, to whom he bore a most remarkable resemblance. He informed the Agent that he was not aware of having such a relative, but that, more than sixty years before, a sister of his had been stolen or lost, who had never been heard from. The Agent, believing the woman among the Shawnees and the lost child to be one and the same, propose to send for her and have the mystery solved.

She was sent for and came to the Agency with an interpreter, not being able to speak or understand a word of English. As soon as Charles Sage saw her, he believed her to be his long lost sister, from the striking family resemblance, got her consent to go home with him, and wrote at once to his brother Samuel in Missouri to come to Kansas immediately and see if he could recognize her features, as he was old enough to remember their sister when she disappeared. He made the journey, and as soon as he saw her he burst into tears, so certain was he that she was his sister Katy. But all suspense and mystery

were dissipated when she informed them through an interpreter that she had been taken from her home when a small child by a white man, lived several years among the Cherokees, then among the Creeks, and finally among the Shawnees, and that in all her wanderings, from tribe to tribe, and from country to country, she had retained the name of Katy. She had been three times married to chiefs of the Shawnee tribe, had lost an only child, and was now a widow.

To place her identity beyond all cavil or doubt, the brothers wrote to their mother, still living on the same spot in Grayson county, Virginia, and then ninety-five years old, to know if she recollected any mark upon the person of Katy by which she might be recognized. In due time they received an answer that she was marked with a ginger-colored spot on one of her shoulders, and on being examined the spot was found. This entirely and unmistakably established her identity.

The brothers now began to arrange to take her to their mother, but before their arrangements had been completed, Katy took the pneumonia and died, and although the parents and lost child never met again on earth, they all "crossed over the river, and are resting under the shade of the trees."

While the writer does not subscribe to human divinations, or human power to solve the mysterious providences in the womb of the future, he must regard the predictions of Granny Moses as the most remarkable since the days of the Witch of Endor.

Should any reader be skeptical as to the truth of any of the remarkable circumstances above stated, they will be attested by Mrs. Elizabeth Delp, sister of the lost one, who still lives at the old homestead in Grayson, or Mr. Thompson Sage, a brother, at Stickleyville, Lee county, Virginia.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ABDUCTOR OF KATY SAGE—THE HORSE-THIEF'S REVENGE.

The preceding chapter is a truthful narrative of the abduction of Katy Sage, of Grayson county, in 1792, and this chapter will explain by whom the cruel outrage was perpetrated, and the motive prompting the bad man who cast this broad shadow upon an innocent family.

James Sage, the father of Katy, was a native of Maryland, and a soldier of the Revolution. He belonged to the brigade of General Enoch Poor, and was in the battles of Brandywine, Monmouth and Germantown, endured the sufferings and privations of that terrible winter at Valley Forge, and was an eye-witness of the last act in the great drama—the surrender Lord of Cornwallis at Yorktown. He married at Fredericktown, Maryland, in 1780, and after the close of the war the next year removed with his young wife to the “back woods,” and settled on Cripple creek, Wythe county, Virginia. He remained here some ten years, and then removed to Elk creek, in what is now Grayson county, where he resided when his child was stolen, the old homestead being still in possession of his descendants.

Owning several fine horses, and more than he needed for his then small farming operations, as did also two of his neighbors by the names of Delp and Cornut—names still familiar in that county—they concluded to turn them into the range, which, at that early day, was very fine, and

sufficient to keep them, even in winter, in good condition, without additional food. This was early in the spring of 1792, and the horses had been out but a few weeks when Mr. Cornut, on going out to salt them, discovered that three of the most valuable were missing. The three neighbors, with as little delay as possible, packed up provisions for the journey, shouldered their rifles and started in pursuit. They were not long in finding the trail, which led them along the bank and toward the source of that crooked and turbulent stream now known by the name of Holston, to the base of White Top mountain. Here the trail divided, one of the horses keeping along the side of the mountain, the others slightly diverging from the regular trace.

This was doubtless done for the purpose of baffling pursuit, and made it apparent that there were at least two thieves. Mr. Sage followed the track of the single horse, and his companions followed those of the two. When the former reached the summit of that part of White Top known at this day as Elk Garden, the long swag connecting White Top and Balsam, even yet the most luxuriant and nutritious pasturage in all that vast range, he came upon all three of the horses hobbled and quietly grazing, but the thieves, who were doubtless enjoying themselves in the cabin of one of the few squatters of that wild and almost inaccessible region, eluded their search. He soon called up his companions, and catching and mounting the horses, which had their halters on them, they made their way back to the settlement.

Suspicion had been directed to a man by the name of Talbert as the principal thief, who had been dodging about

from settlement to settlement without apparent business or visible means of support, and who had been seen on Elk creek a day or two before the disappearance of Katy Sage. He was never seen there afterwards, and it was the opinion of the community that he had stolen the child, and that the motive was revenge for the loss of the horses he had stolen from the father.

Katy informed her brothers, through an interpreter, that she had been stolen by a white man, who picked her up in his arms, muffled her head and face with a handkerchief, and threatened to kill her if she gave any alarm. He carried her with considerable speed until he thought himself safe from pursuit, made his way to the Cherokee Nation, disposed of her there, disappeared, and she never saw or heard of him afterwards.

Katy's subsequent history being given in the preceding chapter, these facts are given to illustrate how slight a provocation may sometimes induce a bad man to commit a most inhuman crime. The child could be of no benefit to him, farther than the trifle the Indians might give for her with the hope of securing a ransom, but the distress of the father in the loss of the little one, far more bitter than if it had died in his arms, was the gratification sought by her abductor, appropriately termed the Horse-thief's Revenge.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PIONEERS OF CASTLE'S WOODS, AND TROUBLES WITH THE INDIANS.

The following chapter is made up from notes furnished the writer by William J. Dickenson, Esq., grandson of one of the pioneers, a prominent citizen of Russell, an intelligent and honorable gentleman, and the statements, therefore, may be regarded as accurate.

There was a settlement at Black's Fort (now Abingdon), and another on the North Fork of Holston, when the first known adventurers visited what has ever since been known as Castle's Woods, in Russell county. This was a very fertile tract of country on Clinch river, with splendid range and fine hunting and fishing. It is still one of the most desirable tracts of country in Southwestern Virginia, and embraces some of the best farms and most successful farmers in all this highly favored region. Persons now passing that way, and seeing the broad fields and meadows stretched out as far as the vision can reach, all covered with grain and grass and waving corn, with orchards, flowers and fruits and elegant homesteads, wonder why such a beautiful and extensive tract should be called "woods." Just about one hundred years ago—not a long period in the history of a country—the first trees in that grand old forest were felled, and for the first time the smoke from a white man's cabin mingled with the mists of the river and struggled along the face of the hills.

The first four pioneers were a man by the name of Castle, whose name the section still bears ; Henry Dickenson, Charles Bickley and Simon Oesher. A very short time after, a number of others, hearing of the game and the range, found their way into this beautiful valley, among whom were James Bush, William Fraley, Archelous Dickenson, Humphrey Dickenson, James Osborn, William Richie, Jerry Harold, William Robertson, Richard Long, William Long, William Bowlin, William Russell (for whom the county was subsequently named), Samuel Porter, Henry Neece, Henry Hamblin and William Wharton. Humphrey Dickenson was killed by the Indians in the ford of the river, about which time Richard and William Long killed an Indian spy near the same place. The families of several of these pioneers were murdered by the Indians.

The writer will now have to go back a little to tell about the fort and the transactions that occurred there. The first cabin was erected by Castle, about one mile west of what is known as Rock Farm, at a spring near where William R. Mead now resides. The fort subsequently built was called Bush's Fort, and stood on an eminence not far from the spot now occupied by what is called Mud Store. This was in 1770 or '71. Not long after this—perhaps during one of these years—transpired the occurrences the writer is about to relate. A party of about seventeen Indians stealthily approached the fort, at a time when all the men were out, and when the only occupants were women and children. Before approaching it, however, though only a short distance from it, they met with a young woman by

the name of Ann Neece, who had gone out for some purpose, whom they tomahawked and scalped, and left for dead. They then approached the fort, and were discovered by Simon Ocsher, Henry Dickenson and Charles Bickley, who happened to be working at a mill near by. The Indians observing them about the same time, and the white men being unarmed, their situation was a fearful one. It was now to be a struggle which party should get to the fort first. Charles Bickley remarked "Boys, follow me," and they all started for the fort at full speed, the Indians halting to fire upon them. They got safely into the fort through a shower of balls without receiving a scratch, thus literally running the gauntlet. There were but two guns in the fort, and with these Ocsher and Dickenson each killed an Indian. The balance of the savages, knowing nothing of the strength of the fort, and their guns being empty, hastily picked up their fallen companions and fled into the woods. Meeting with a colored man hunting sheep, who belonged to Henry Dickenson, they captured him, and he was never heard of afterwards.

Some hours after their departure, and while there was still apprehensions of their return by the few persons in the fort, Ann Neece was seen slowly approaching, as bloody as if she had been dipped in a pool of gore, with streams jetting from her head, apparently as numerous as had been the hairs of her head before she was scalped, each jet about the size of a hair. She recovered, married and raised a family, and some of her descendants are still living in Russell county. Henry Dickenson was a soldier in the Indian wars as well as the Revolution, and was at

the great battles of Point Pleasant and King's Mountain. Charles Bickley, being a younger man, lived with him till he married. He lived many years, and, like Henry Dickenson, raised a large family and left many descendants. The writer has no information of the future of Castle and Ocsher.

Castle's Woods, as before said, was first settled about one hundred years ago. The first settlement could hardly be considered permanent, as the pioneers were sometimes in the fort and at other times on their claims. They would raise small patches of corn in the summer and go into fort in winter, or back to the Holston settlements. Some of them cultivated their crops simply with the hoe, while others used a rude implement made of a forked limb, one prong sharpened to scratch the loose soil, the other to fasten the horse to, and the main stem answered for a handle. Their horses, when not in use, were belled and turned out to feed at large on the nutritious cane and wild grass. The pioneer's rifle and dog were mostly his stock in trade, and furnished him an abundant supply of game of all kinds, from the buffalo down to the smaller varieties, and all the streams furnished fish in any quantity and of the most delicious flavor. There was no complaint then of scarcity of meat, for the pioneer and his rifle were inseparable companions—they walked together, rode together, rested together and slept together. When he was hungry, he had but to draw his trusty friend to his face and pick the fatest game of the forest. They were all marksmen, and dressed in buckskin breeches with skins of other animals for other garments, and 'coonskin caps

to cover the head with the tail hanging down behind, where it properly belonged. The women wore skins and linsey instead of crinoline, and short gowns and petticoats instead of balmorals and hoop-skirts. They had but little, needed but little, and wanted but little. They were as free as birds, happy as kittens, and roamed the forest at large, and for this liberty and these enjoyments they dared the dangers of the tomahawk and scalping-knife, and were ever ready to fight to the death to maintain them. They lived like brothers, helped each other to rear their cabins, clear their patches, roll their logs, gather their harvests, and divided the last hoe-cake when necessary. If one had occasion to rejoice they all rejoiced; if one had occasion to mourn they all mourned. It cost but little labor to raise a crop, the generous soil producing fifty bushels of corn to the acre even with the deficient culture they gave it. At first they pounded their corn for bread, then used hand-mills, and would have been as happy as children at a modern picnic, but for the troubles sometimes occasioned by the predatory incursions of the red man.

This, in some sort, is a brief history of the first settlement of Castle's Woods, and these items are thrown together more for the purpose of preserving them for the benefit of coming generations, than a mere fondness for writing. They are believed to be accurate, and if so, they may furnish a portion of the warp or woof of a future history of that beautiful but remote valley among the mountains, in this far off corner of the Old Dominion.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRoubles OF THE EARLY SETTLERS.

Every little scrap of history connected with the early settlement of this part of the State will some day become important, and hence the writer has attempted to seek out and gather up such scraps, in order to preserve them for the use of the future historian.

During the spring of 1777—several years before the capture and murder of the Livingston family on the North Fork of Holston, an account of which is given in a preceding chapter—a party of Indians, under the lead of the same half-breed Bengé and a savage white man by the name of Hargus, crossed the range of hills north of Clinch at High Knob, and made their way to Bluegrass Fort on Stony creek, which was not far from what is now known as Osborn's Ford, in Scott county. The white man Hargus had been living in the neighborhood, but had absconded to the Indians to evade punishment for crime, and became an inhuman persecutor of his race.

The Indians, having cautiously and stealthily approached the river down Stony creek, and fearing they might be discovered, crossed some distance below and came up in the rear of a high cliff south of and opposite the fort, concealing their main body in the bushes at the base. In order to command a view of the fort, they sent one of their number to the summit of the cliff to spy out the

condition of the fort and to act as a decoy. He ascended in the night, and climbed a tall cedar with thick foliage at the top, on the very verge of the precipice, and just at break of day he began to gobble like a wild turkey. This imitation was so well executed it would have been successful but for the warnings of an old Indian fighter present by the name of Matthew Gray. Hearing what they supposed to be a turkey, and desiring him for breakfast, some of the younger members of the company proposed to go up the cliff and shoot him, but Gray told them if they wanted to keep their scalps on their heads they had better let that turkey alone, and if they would follow his directions he would give them an Indian for breakfast.

Having promised to obey his instructions, he took several of them with him to a branch which he knew to be in full view of the Indians, and told them to wash and dabble in the stream to divert the attention of the enemy for half an hour, while he went to look for the turkey, which still continued to gobble at short intervals. Gray, having borrowed an extra rifle from David Cox, crouched below the bank of the stream, and in this manner followed its course to where it emptied into the river half a mile below, at a place known as Shallow Shoals. Here he took the timber, eluding the vigilance of the Indians by getting in their rear. He then crept cautiously up the ridge, guided by the gobbling of the Indian in the top of the cedar on the cliff. Getting within about seventy-five yards of the tree, and waiting until his turkeyship had finished an extra big gobble, he drew a bead upon him and put a ball in his head. With a yell and spring the Indian went

crashing through the tree-tops and over the precipice, a mangled mass of flesh and bones. Then commenced a race for life. Gray had played a desperate game, and nothing but his fleetness and his knowledge of savage craft could save him. He knew that the Indians in ambush would go to their companion on hearing the report of the rifle, and that they were not more than two hundred yards away. He did his best running and dodging, but they were so close upon him that he would have been captured or killed, had not the men of the fort rushed out to his rescue.

The Indians, finding that they had been discovered, and that they were not strong enough to attack or besiege the fort, started in the direction of Castle's Woods. The persons at Bluegrass knowing that the settlement at Castle's Woods was not aware that the Indians were in the vicinity, determined to warn them, but the difficulty was how this was to be done, and who would be bold enough to undertake it, as the Indians were between the two forts. When a volunteer for the perilous expedition was called for, Matthew Gray, who but an hour before had made such a narrow escape, boldly offered his services, and, getting the fastest horse and two rifles, started out through the almost unbroken forest. Moving cautiously along the trail, he came near Ivy spring, about two miles from the fort, when he saw signs which satisfied him that the Indians had halted at the spring. There was no way to flank them, and he must make a perilous dash or fail in his mission of mercy. Being an old Indian fighter, he knew that they seldom put out pickets. The trail making a short curve near the spring, he at once formed the plan of riding

quietly up to the curve, and then, with a shot and a yell, to dash through them. This he did, and before they had sufficiently recovered from their surprise to give him a parting volley, he was out of reach. He arrived at the settlement in safety, and thus in all probability saved the lives of all the settlers. The Indians, however, captured two women on the way—Polly Alley at Osborn's Ford, as they went up the river, and Jane Whitaker near Castle's Woods.

Finding the fort at Castle's Woods fully prepared for their reception, the band had to abandon their murderous purpose and pass on with their captives, without permitting themselves to be seen. Reaching Guess' Station, they remained part of the night, but finding it well prepared for defence, they continued their journey to the "Breaks," where the Russell and Pound forks of Big Sandy pass through the Cumberland mountain. Here, tradition says, they tarried half a day, and loaded themselves with silver ore. This tradition has led some to suppose that this was the place where Sol Mullins, the noted maker of spurious coin, obtained his metal, as he long inhabited that region.

After this they traveled every day, resting at night, until they reached the Ohio at the mouth of Sandy. Crossing the river on a raft of logs with their prisoners, who suffered more than can be described or conceived on the long march, they reached their destination at Sandusky. The two young women were closely confined for some time after their arrival, though they were eventually stripped and painted and allowed the liberty of the village, closely watched for a month or more, but seeing they made no attempt to escape, the Indians abated their vigilance.

Observing this the girls determined to make an effort at escape. Having been permitted to wander about at pleasure from time to time and punctually returning at night, the Indians were thrown off their guard. Having wandered one day farther from the village than usual, and being in a dense forest, they started out on the long journey toward their home. After traveling all night, they found themselves only about eight miles from the village, and finding a hollow log, they crept into it, with the determination of remaining concealed during the day. They had been in it but a few minutes before Hargus and two or three Indians came along in pursuit and sat down upon it, and the girls heard them form their plans for the next day's search. Returning late in the afternoon, having lost the trail, the Indians sat down upon the same log to rest, and again the occupants beneath them heard their plans for pursuit. These were, that a party should pass down each of two rivers which had their sources near their village and emptying into the Ohio. They became very much enraged at having been baffled by two inexperienced girls, and threatened their victims with all sorts of tortures should they be recaptured. Hargus, more furious than the Indians themselves, striking his tomahawk into the log to emphasize his threats, and finding it return a hollow sound, declared the girls might be in it, as they had been traced thus far, where the trail was lost, and sent one of the savages to the end of the log to see. The savage went and looked, but seeing that a spider had stretched its web across the aperture, he made no further examination. This web, which probably had not been there an hour, saved them from recapture, and it may be from a cruel death.

After the Indians left, the girls, having heard their plans, left the log and resumed their weary journey, taking a leading ridge which ran at right angles with the Ohio and led them to it not far from opposite the mouth of Sandy. They could hear the yells of the Indians in pursuit each day and night until they reached the river, when, from a high promontory, they had the satisfaction of seeing their pursuers give up the chase and turn back towards their village. They had nothing to eat for three long days and nights but a partially devoured squirrel from which they had frightened a hawk, and on the night of the third day after the Indians had relinquished the pursuit, they ventured to the river, where they were fortunate enough the next day to see a flat-boat with white men in it descending the stream, who, on being hailed, took them aboard, set them across at the mouth of Sandy, and furnished them with a sufficiency of bread and dried venison to last them two weeks, and a blanket each, in which time they expected to make their way back to one of the settlements on Clinch. They took their course up Sandy on the same trail they had gone down some months before, but in one of the rapid and dangerous crossings of that stream, they lost all their provisions as well as blankets. This, though a great calamity, did not discourage them, but pushing on, with the blessings of kindred, friends and home in view, they found their way through Pound Gap and reached Guess' Station about the middle of September, having been on the journey about a month, after encountering hardships and dangers under which many of the sterner sex of the present day would give way.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND FLATS.

The following outline of the battle of Long Island Flats—the last general battle of the Cherokees for the continued possession of their favorite hunting ground on Holston—was taken from the lips of some of the immediate descendants of the pioneers who participated in the sanguinary struggle. It differs but slightly from the account given in Ramsay's *Annals of Tennessee*, which the writer had not seen when this outline was written some years ago, and it may, therefore, be regarded as very nearly if not quite correct.

This battle occurred on the 20th of July, 1776, but a little over two weeks after the adoption of the Declaration of Independence and the last Indian depredations at Abingdon. It was the last grand Cherokee rally to overrun the whole Holston country and to exterminate the scattered inhabitants. Runners had been sent to all the Indian towns in what are now Eastern Georgia, Middle and East Tennessee and Western North Carolina—then the territory of the great and warlike Cherokee Nation—when, according to one account seven hundred, and according to another fifteen hundred painted warriors were gathered at a common rendezvous, and arrangements entered into for the bloody expedition. The principal

Chief of the tribe was the celebrated Dragging-Canoe, a savage of more than common bravery and skill, who was thought to be the equal of Tecumseh, and whose hatred of the "pale-face" amounted to a mania. They met at Long Island, in the South Fork of Holston, a short distance above the present town of Kingsport, Tennessee, and six or seven miles from the Virginia line. Here Dragging-Canoe divided his forces into three divisions, one to go up the bank of the North Fork towards its source, another to keep up the South Fork, and the third to proceed up the intermediate valley to Black's Fort, now Abingdon, then the principal settlement in the Cherokee hunting-grounds. The Chief himself was with the latter division, which was the largest, anticipating the most formidable resistance.

There was a fort on each of the routes selected—one on Watauga, a tributary of the South Fork; another in the Fleenor settlement on the North Fork, and the third at the base of Eden's Ridge, at the junction of what is now known as the Blountville and Island roads. These forts were to be first attacked and destroyed, as it was Indian policy never to leave an enemy in rear if it could be prevented. This accomplished, a general and indiscriminate massacre of the entire Holston settlement was supposed to be an easy task, with a force very nearly equal to the whole population.

As above stated, the three divisions started from Long Island on the 20th day of July, 1776. A few days before this, information of the contemplated invasion having, by some fortunate means, reached the settlement at Eden's

Fort, runners were dispatched to apprise the settlements along the rivers and at Black's Fort. At that time there were three men in this county by the names of James Thompson, John Campbell and James Shelby, each of whom had a company of minute men, the whole comprising only about one hundred and seventy-five, who at once determined to meet and attack the three divisions of Indians in detail. Neither of the officers ranked higher than captain, and as Mr. Thompson was the senior of the three, he was honored with the chief command. Capt. Thompson lived in the vicinity of Seven Mile Ford, Captain Campbell at Black's Fort, and Captain Shelby at or near where the flourishing town of Bristol is now located.

As it was known that Indians on the war-path moved with great rapidity, and as it was desirable to encounter them as soon after their division as possible, and before they should have time to commit many depredations, the men of the three companies were gathered, armed and equipped in a few hours, and on the night of the 19th of July they reached Eden's Fort, only seven miles from Long Island, whence the Indians were to start out next morning. Early on the morning of the 20th, Captain Thompson and his men crossed the ridge, in order to meet the middle and principal division led by the Chief, in the broad and beautiful bottom now belonging to Mr. James W. Preston. Arriving before the Indians, the men were disposed behind trees and logs, and among the tall cane, and awaited their coming. It was a trying situation, that calm summer morning, for that little handful of brave mountaineers standing among the tall trees of that quiet

and blooming valley, awaiting the coming of not less, perhaps, than three times their number of painted savages upon the war-path, breathing fire and slaughter, and led by a Chief whose skill, courage and cruelty had made his name a terror throughout the border. Yet they were calm and determined, and for the sake of the jewels left in their cabins along the bright waters of the Holston and in the green valleys among the hills, each pledged himself to the other to turn back the tawny tide to their distant wigwams or leave their own bones to bleach upon the plain. They knew the strategy of Dragging-Canoe, and believed that he would lead his warriors along this bottom in order to conceal his approach to Eden's Fort, and hence they awaited his coming. They were not kept long in suspense, for ere the birds had ceased their matin songs, or the sun had lifted the mist above the tree-tops, the long, silent line of dusky warriors was discerned winding like a huge serpent among the timber, seemingly anticipating the carnival of blood they were to enjoy within the hour.

As the long file moved cautiously and noiselessly along, without apparent apprehension of immediate danger, the whites permitted the whole body to emerge from the cane and undergrowth into the open woods before a shot was fired or a man of the company had been discovered. At the word of command, every white man's rifle was discharged, many a red-skin fell in his tracks or limped off into the canebrake, and then commenced a running fight from tree to tree, with rifle, tomahawk and knife. The first volley, however, had killed and crippled so many of the Indians, a panic soon seized the balance, and in a run-

ning fight of some six miles across the flats to Long Island, some forty Indians were slain, with probably more than twice that number wounded, the Chief being among the latter, and not a single white man killed or seriously injured.

In passing over the ground a year or two ago, from the spot where the battle commenced a portion of the way to where it terminated, the writer's mind instinctively wandered back to those stirring times when the ancestors of those who now so quietly and happily till the same fields went to their work with their rifles in their hands, and were frequently shot down in the furrow by a lurking foe. He was shown the narrow ravine up which the retreating Indians passed from the bottoms to the flats, and the identical trail, still marked by a tree or some other indication, along which they fled to the island in the river, which they had left that calm summer morning with a burning thirst for blood. Reaching this they were safe; for, although the whites pursued them to the very margin of the stream, and strewed the entire route with the slain, they could not reach the island without fearful loss, and fell back to Eden's Fort. Dragging-Canoe, finding that he had lost a large number of his warriors, and that intelligence of his plans and purposes had reached all the settlements, sent runners after the other divisions, who returned by circuitous routes, made a hasty retreat to their distant towns, and never afterwards appeared in force in the Holston settlements.

Long Island is now a magnificent farm of several hun-

dred acres, and the whole country, from Mr. Preston's bottom to the river, is laid off in broad fields, dotted with comfortable homesteads, and teems with an intelligent and thrifty population, most of them descendants of those who reared their rude cabins in the unbroken forest and endured all the hardships and dangers incident to pioneer life.

CHAPTER XXXI.

REMARKABLE INCIDENTS IN PIONEER LIFE.

This chapter will comprise some interesting incidents culled from a mass of traditions gathered by the writer in his long intercourse with the descendants of the pioneers of the mountains. He gives them as he received them, without actually knowing them to be true in all their details, but believing them to be so in the main, although some of them may largely partake of the marvellous—but let it not be forgotten that “truth is often stranger than fiction.”

A preceding chapter speaks of Burk, the discoverer of that magnificent valley high up among the mountains in Tazewell county, still bearing his name, and it is now proposed to give another incident in his eventful life.

After discovering and for several years before removing his family to the Garden, Mr. Burk was in the habit, during the summer, of visiting it for the purpose of hunting and grazing his stock. Having remained there with two companions one season later than usual, for the purpose of tanning some hides he had on hand, about the period that the Shawnees, under the lead of the great Chief Cornstalk, were making incursions as far eastward as the Shenandoah Valley, the weather became quite cold before they were able to start for the settlement on New river.

Having crossed the mountain forming the northern

boundary of the Garden, with several pack-horses loaded with rolls of leather, night overtook them at what is now known as Sharon, a beautiful watering-place in Bland county. Instead of camping out, as was the custom in those days, they took shelter for the night in a rude structure of logs that had been thrown up for the protection of hunters and graziers in cold and stormy weather. Tying their horses to the trees, and throwing their rolls of leather on the floor, they started up a fire in the hut, partook of their simple meal, and lay down to rest. Hearing a strange noise during the night, and supposing something to be the matter with one of their horses, one of their men, who happened to be awake at the moment, arose and looked out, but seeing that the horses were all quiet, he returned to the fire and soon fell asleep again.

Rising at an early hour, and going out to feed their horses before starting for a long day's travel through an unbroken wilderness, they were astonished to find one of the horses dead, having been stabbed with a large knife during the night. From this and other indications they had unmistakable evidence that Indians had been prowling around while they slept, and were puzzled to conjecture why the marauders had not made an attack upon them, as there were but three of them, and all sleeping soundly from the fatigues of the preceding day. They hurriedly gathered up the balance of the horses, packed on the rolls of leather and started along the trace, in momentary expectation of being surprised and perhaps murdered by an ambushed foe. They had gone but a mile or two, when they came to a camp-fire in the woods, and were

startled at the horrid sight of the bodies of three white men, who had been murdered as they slept, and scalped, apparently but a few hours before.

The death of the horse had pretty well satisfied them that Indians had been lurking about, but now they had no doubt but that there was a party of Cornstalk's scouts on the war-path. They disposed of the murdered men as best they could under the circumstances, hurried on to the nearest settlement and gave the alarm. The presence of an Indian, like that of a mad dog in New England, instantly roused the population, and it was but a very short time till scouting parties were out and on the trail. One of the parties came upon the Indians, five or six in number, the next day, on Walker's Creek, and killed all but one, who escaped their fire, but who was subsequently captured. He revealed to his captors that his party had followed Burk's trail, came to his camp about midnight, peeped through the logs of the hut to see how many were there, and mistaking the rolls of leather lying about the floor for so many men, they concluded the party was too strong to attack, unless they were asleep, and killed the horse to see if the noise would arouse them. The circumstance of one of Burk's companions looking out when he heard the noise led the Indians to believe that the whole party were awake, and hence they passed on to the other party whose trail they had seen, and murdered and plundered them. The rolls of leather saved Burk and his companions that night, but he and his family were murdered by the Indians a few years later.

About this period, there was a family living on Walker's

Creek, in what is now Bland county, by the name of White. During one of the predatory incursions of the Indians, they captured and carried off a little boy belonging to the family. A number of years after, during one of the expeditions of General Clarke to quell the Indians in Kentucky, he had encamped on the bank of the Ohio, awaiting the return of scouts who had been sent out to reconnoitre. One of his men, by the name of White, from Walker's Creek, and brother of the boy that had been stolen, was out a short distance from camp in search of game, when he saw a solitary Indian sitting on a log mending his moccasins. His first impulse was to shoot him, as all the Indians in that region were hostile, but fearing the report of his gun might start up a score of red-skins in the vicinity, and as the back of the savage on the log was toward him, he concluded to approach stealthily and capture him alive. He did so, and took him into camp. From his hair and other indications, they supposed him to be a white man, and after compelling him to scrub the paint off, their suspicions were confirmed, and they subsequently learned through an interpreter—as the captive had forgotten his native language—that his name was White, had been stolen by the Indians from his home in Virginia when a child, and eventually proved to be the brother of the man who captured him, and came so near taking his life.

The brothers lived many years, settled in Kentucky, and he who had been so many years among the Indians was a delegate in the Legislature in the early organization of the State.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A SINGULAR INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF HON. WILLIAM C. PRESTON.

To give variety as well as interest to this hastily gotten up little volume, the writer has interspersed a chapter here and there illustrating the troubles and sufferings of the pioneers of this part of Virginia, a few hunting adventures of others than the great trapper of White Top, and he now proposes to give a chapter narrating a curious incident in the early life of the Hon. William C. Preston.

All who have arrived at the age of maturity in South-western Virginia, know that the above named distinguished orator and Senator of South Carolina, and who died in that State a few years ago, was a native of the town of Abingdon, Virginia, and that this was his home from infancy to manhood. Having, however, left Virginia at the age of twenty-four, he was better known by his brilliant career and world-wide reputation than by a personal intercourse with the people of his native hills. He was born in 1798, and about the year 1815 entered Columbia College, South Carolina. He was the grand-nephew of Patrick Henry, and the grandson of General William Campbell, the hero of King's mountain, and inherited the eloquence of one and the name of the other, and the talents and patriotism of both. During his collegiate course, he spent his vacations at home, and determined, on one occa-

sion, instead of taking the tedious and circuitous stage-route back to his school, to mount his horse and ride through the mountains, as he loved the beautiful in nature, and could thus see and enjoy the grand scenery along the Laurel, Watauga, Yadkin and Catawba, and have the opportunity of visiting King's mountain, the field upon which his ancestor had led, in 1781, many of the brave yeomen of his native county, the dust of a number of whom was left to mingle with the soil of that remote and silent battle-field.

Leaving Abingdon, Mr. Preston proceeded up the Laurel, one of the most rapid and dangerous streams in all this mountain country, and much more dangerous to ford at that day than now, and which he was compelled to cross twenty-six times in less than half as many miles. The gorge through which it winds and tumbles is still among the wildest and most romantic in all this region, precipices on either side of the narrow pass rising to the height of thousands of feet in places, and even at this day the covert of wolves and bears, and any number of venomous reptiles.

Leaving this and passing along the picturesque table-land where the pleasant little village of Taylorsville sits like a queen on her throne, his path led him across the Iron mountain into the valley of Watauga at the base of the Blue Ridge, where, spread out in rare and wonderful beauty, the "Vale of the Cross," the location selected many years ago by the eccentric Bishop Ives, of North Carolina, for his impracticable school of celibacy. Passing this, the road, measuring twenty-three miles in its wind-

ings, begins to ascend the Blue Ridge, crossing which it passes on the summit two springs, not more than three hundred yards apart, one the source of New river, running north hundreds of miles to the Ohio, and the other the source of the Yadkin, running south as many miles to the Atlantic. Here, too, within a few minutes' walk of these springs, is Blowing Rock, one of the grandest natural curiosities with which these mountains abound. This rock is upon the summit of the Ridge, overlooking the valley of John's river, which winds two thousand feet below. The rock derives its name from the circumstance that a man standing upon it may cast his hat out over the chasm beneath, which, after hanging in midair a moment, will float back high above him, and may, as did that of the writer's on one occasion, lodge in the top of a tree. This is caused by the shelving nature of the rock on the under side, which, catching all the winds, sends them out in a strong current, although there may not be a zephyr stirring anywhere else in the vicinity.

Leaving this point, the rough bridle-path, as it was when Mr. Preston traveled it, wound along the bank of the tortuous Yadkin—upon which Daniel Boon grew to manhood and married his wife—to the southern base of the Blue Ridge, where the country opens out wide and fertile, and which was one of the favorite hunting ranges of the Catawba Indians. Passing through these broad and now highly cultivated bottoms, then all covered with timber and cane, Mr. Preston followed the trace that now passes through the handsome and thriving villages of Lenoir and Newton, to the old town of Lincolnton, a

place of note and enterprise before the Revolution, but more notorious in later years as the locality of "Ramsour's Mill Pond," into which the patriotic yeomen of the vicinity drove and drowned a number of Tories during the old war.

Resting here for the night, Mr. Preston left next morning for King's mountain, only fifteen miles distant. Riding leisurely along, admiring the wild honeysuckle, laurel and ivy, here so variegated and gaudy, and charmed with the mist-like appearance of the mountains far in his rear, he halted near the middle of the day at a wayside inn, called for dinner for himself and feed for his horse, and here occurred the incident the writer has taken such a round-about way to approach. When it is remembered that Mr. Preston was the grandson of General Campbell, who almost annihilated the Tories in the neighborhood of that inn, the incident that follows will be better understood. While dinner was preparing, he threw himself upon the grass in the yard under the trees. The landlady seemed to be excited and uneasy, frequently passing and scrutinizing him very critically, with not the most pleasant cast of countenance in the world. When the meal came on, and he was seated at the table, she planted herself opposite to and riveted her eyes upon him, with something like a savage scowl. Seeing that she had attracted his notice by her manner, she thus addressed him:

"Young man, I 'spose you've noticed me lookin' at you, and I can't help it. I'd like to know your name and where you live."

"Certainly, madam," replied Mr. Preston, "you shall be gratified. My name is Preston, and I live in Virginia."

The old lady, as if relieved of a painful apprehension, responded: "Well, well, I'm mighty glad your name is Preston, and it is a lucky thing for you that it is, but you look so much like the meanest and wickedest man I ever saw in my life, that it made my blood bile as soon as I sot eyes on you. His name was Campbell, the head-devil among a band of rebel robbers and murderers that fit and killed Colonel Furguson and a heap of our people on that ridge yonder a good many years ago, and the last time I saw my poor dear husband alive, that bad man was riding behind him sticking a bagnet in him to make him keep up with their hosses. If your name had been Campbell—and I was afraid it was, because you look so much like him—I don't know what the boys mout have done to you when they come into dinner."

Mr. Preston, of course, didn't inform her of the relationship between General Campbell and himself, when he found that he was in the house of a widow of one of the Tories his grandfather had hung to a limb in the neighboring forest.

Mr. Preston often related this incident as one of the adventures of his boyhood, but the writer has related it for the purpose of giving those of his readers who have never seen the section through which he passed, a faint conception of the magnificent scenery of all that long and towering mountain range which seems to have been piled up for the purpose of putting a barrier between Virginia and North Carolina, and from the summit of which vast portions of the two great States may be seen from the same stand-point. He traveled the identical route in 1860

pursued by Mr. Preston more than half a century before, then a mere bridle-path, now a broad turnpike, with here and there a beautiful farm in the plains, and on the gentler slopes the cabins of happy families, many of whom never saw a Yankee, and knew but little of the terrible struggle that so recently convulsed all the rest of the world.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MASSACRE AND CAPTIVITY OF THE PIONEERS OF ABB'S VALLEY.

A book of the character of this, professing to illustrate the more prominent incidents of pioneer life among these mountains, would be very incomplete without some reference to the Indian massacre in Abb's Valley in 1786. The following epitome, therefore, is made up both from what the writer has heard from the lips of some of the older citizens and what has been written by others, so blended that he finds the use of inverted commas impracticable.

Abb's Valley is situated in the northeast corner of Tazewell county, some fourteen miles from Jeffersonville and about the same from Burk's Garden in the southern corner, the three points forming a triangle. It is a very rich and picturesque valley, twelve miles long and less than a quarter wide, hemmed in between two ridges. A very remarkable feature in it is, that whilst there are numerous bold springs, there is no stream upon the surface. These springs break out from the hillsides, run a few paces and disappear, all combining to make a considerable subterranean creek which has been discovered in various places not far below the surface, and which eventually finds its way out and constitutes one of the principal sources of Bluestone, a tributary of New river, the latter being the principal tributary of the Kanawha, which empties into

the Ohio at Point Pleasant. Another singular feature is, that in the ridges surrounding Abb's Valley are found the sources of four noted rivers—Kanawha to the east, Big Sandy and Guyandotte to the north, and Clinch to the west—the latter a tributary to the Tennessee. All rising within a mile or two of each other, they flow away in different directions, and finally unite in the Ohio hundreds of miles apart. The mountains from this point also form singular features in the topography of the country. Standing on top of Sandy Ridge (the northern boundary of the Valley), you see Clinch, Point Lick, Rich and other great ranges running parallel from east to west, and then a number of high and rugged ranges, each with its local name, all running transversely, or from south to north, and terminating at or near the Ohio river. The war-paths of the Indians were on the summits of the latter ranges.

These peculiarities may seem of minor importance to the casual observer, but to the man of thought they are of absorbing interest, affording pleasure in their contemplation, illustrating, as they do, the wonderful and magnificently arranged topography of this unrivaled country.

"But," a reader may say, "I don't care anything about your ridges and water-courses—let us have something about the early settlement of Abb's Valley and the Indian massacre you have promised." Very well, you shall be gratified—and in order to do so the more accurately and graphically, the writer will be under the necessity of drawing most of his facts from a concise history of Virginia compiled by Mr. Henry Howe in 1837, with whom he had

the pleasure of an acquaintance and the honor of assisting to a trifling extent.

Abb's Valley (says Mr. Howe) was settled by James Moore in 1775. He removed from Rockbridge county, and was induced to emigrate to this spot on account of its fertility and its adaptedness to stock-raising. There, with the aid of an old Englishman by the name of John Simpson, he erected his cabin; and with his pious wife, both being members of the Presbyterian Church, he erected his altar to God, cleared a piece of ground, and there resided with his family till they were destroyed, frequently going into fort, which was almost every summer. The first of his family who was captured was James, his second son, a lad in the fourteenth year of his age. This occurred on the 7th of September, 1784. This son died some six or eight years ago, and the following facts were related by himself:

He had been sent by his father to a distant field in the Valley to catch a horse to go to mill, when three Indians, one of them an old man and the others youths, sprang from behind a log and captured him. This was about the middle of the day, and they immediately proceeded with him on the journey to their towns on the Miami. As these were some three hundred miles distant, the tramp was of course painful and distressing to the boy. He finally arrived at Chillicothe, the principal Indian town, where he was very well treated and kept a year, when he was taken to Detroit and sold. We will here leave James Moore for a time and return to Abb's Valley and the stirring events that subsequently transpired.

Such was the fertility of the soil and the excellency of

the spontaneous grass, that Mr. Moore kept about one hundred horses and a large stock of cattle, which principally wintered themselves. On the 14th of July 1788—not quite two years after the capture of his son—early in the morning, a gang of horses had come in from the range to the lick-blocks, about one hundred yards from the house, and Mr. Moore had gone out to salt them. Two men living with him had gone out to a field to reap wheat. The Indians, about thirty in number, who were lying in ambush watching the house, supposing that all the men were absent, rushed forward with all speed. As they advanced they commenced firing, and killed three children in the yard. Mr. Moore attempted to get to the house, but finding it surrounded, ran past through a lot in which the house stood. When he reached the fence he made a halt, and was shot through with seven bullets. After he was shot he ran about forty yards and fell. He was then scalped by the Indians, and afterwards buried by the whites on the spot where he fell, and where his grave may still be seen. The two men who were reaping, hearing the firing and seeing the house surrounded, fled and alarmed the settlements—the nearest being six miles distant. As soon as the alarm was given, Mrs. Moore and a young woman living with her by the name of Martha Ivins, barred the door. There was no man in the house except the old Englishman, John Simpson, and he was sick in bed on the loft. There were several guns in the house, but they were all empty. Martha Ivins took two of them up to Simpson, but she found him in a dying condition, having been shot in the head through a crack.

The Indians then proceeded to cut down the door, during which time Martha Ivins lifted a plank and went under the floor, requesting Polly Moore (then only eight years old), who had the youngest child in her arms (which was crying), to leave it and come under also. Polly looked at the child a moment, clasped it to her heart, and determined to share its fate.

The Indians having broken into the house, took Mrs. Moore and her children—viz: John, Jane, Polly and Peggy—prisoners, set fire to the buildings and left. Martha remained under the floor a short time, and then came out without being seen and hid under a log that lay across the spring branch. The Indians having tarried a short time for the purpose of catching horses, one of them sat down upon the log to fix his gunlock, when Miss Ivins, supposing he had seen her and was about to shoot, came out and gave herself up. They then started for their towns. Perceiving that John Moore was a boy weak in both body and mind, and unable to travel, they killed him the first day. A few days after they dashed out the brains of the babe against a tree. The journey was a very long and sore one, and for days together they were without food. They finally reached the Indian towns on the Miami, where Polly fell into the hands of an Indian and his squaw who were very kind to her. Mrs. Moore and her daughter Jane were burnt at the stake. Their tortures lasted some time, during which Mrs. Moore manifested the utmost Christian fortitude, at intervals conversing with her daughter Polly and Martha Ivins, and expressing great anxiety for the moment to arrive when her soul would soar away to the better inheritance.

We will now return to James Moore, who had been captured nearly two years before, and was still in captivity at Detroit. Through a Shawnee, with whom he formed an acquaintance while at Chillicothe, he first learned the fate of his father's family about a year after it had occurred. His sister Polly and Martha Ivins subsequently fell into the hands of the whites not far from where James was living, and being ransomed they finally all got together, and after a weary travel through an unbroken wilderness for most of the way, they were fortunate enough to get back to their relatives in Rockbridge county. James Moore eventually returned to Abb's Valley, where he lived to a good old age, raised a large family, and died, as already stated, only a few years ago.

Polly remained in Rockbridge. At the age of twelve she was baptized and received into the communion of the Presbyterian Church. She subsequently married the Rev. Samuel Brown, a distinguished Presbyterian clergyman. She became the mother of eleven children—of whom one died in infancy, another while quite young; one is a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church, another married a pious physician, another a clergyman, five were Presbyterian ministers, and the remaining one a communicant of the church. One of her sons, a Presbyterian clergyman, was an assistant editor of a religious paper in Richmond a few years ago. She carried a copy of the New Testament with her throughout her captivity, and her last legacy was a Bible to each of her children.

Martha Ivins married a man by the name of Hummer, emigrated to Indiana, and reared a family of children.

Two of her sons were Presbyterian ministers, and were, a few years ago, one in the Presbytery of Crawfordsville, and the other in the Presbytery of Iowa.

The old place in Abb's Valley is now occupied by the son of James Moore, or his family, and the green fields and fruitful orchards are smiling, and the inhabitants as happy as if the stillness of that beautiful vale had never been broken by the war-whoop, or its soil stained with the blood of the pioneer who erected the first cabin for his family and the first altar to his Master, amid the tall trees and fragrant wild flowers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE MASSACRE OF ARCHIBALD SCOTT AND HIS CHILDREN, AND THE CAPTIVITY OF HIS WIFE.

The writer has somewhere read a very brief and imperfect account of the murder of Archibald Scott and his children, the captivity of his wife, her sufferings among the Indians and subsequent escape; but the following narrative is written from data furnished by Dr. James W. Sage, of Lee county, and Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson, the youngest daughter of Mrs. Scott, now about ninety years of age, and living in the adjoining county of Russell. The statements, therefore, may be relied on as accurate.

Archibald Scott was one of the pioneers of that quiet and beautiful little valley that nestles between Powell's mountain and Waldron's ridge in Lee county, along which Walling's creek winds its noisy and meandering way, and which is now the home of so many prosperous and happy families. This little valley was selected by the first settlers for its fertility, its water facilities, its superior range, romantic surroundings, and remoteness from the usual route of the predatory bands of Indians, who, at that day, occasionally left their towns beyond the Ohio to prey upon the scattered settlers on the Holston. Mr. Scott had married Miss Fanny Dickinson, of Russell county, many of whose relatives are still living there. Being the daughter of one of the brave and hardy pioneers of Castle's Woods,

she had been reared amid the dangers and excitements of frontier life, and hence was a companion upon whose coolness and fortitude her fearless and enterprising husband could depend in their new home on the verge of civilization. They removed to it in 1782—just nine years after Daniel Boone had passed along the same trace with his family on their way to the wilderness beyond the Cumberland, and six years before the Indian raid on the Livingston family on Holston. He located a corn-right to all that valuable tract of 1,000 acres, subsequently owned by Mr. Robert Duff, and still in the possession of Mr. Duff's descendants. Mr. Scott erected his cabin on the head waters of Walling's creek, near the spot now occupied by the residence of Mr. Thomas D. Duff.

Here, with his wife and little ones, he was living on the rewards of honest toil, and doubtless looking forward with prophetic vision to the day, not far in the future, when that rich and romantic valley, reposing so quietly among the mountains, would teem with wealth and a happy population. He bared his brawny arm and cleared the forest, and for three years his cabin was the home of contentment, plenty and domestic joys. In June, 1785, the family, after a day of toil, and partaking of their frugal meal, had retired to rest, without a thought, perhaps, of impending danger, and dreaming, perchance, of the luxuriant harvest so soon to be reaped and garnered. That pleasant summer day, as Mr. Scott was toiling amid the growing corn, he was seen and watched by a band of about twenty Shawnee Indians, who, by some means, had been diverted from their usual route, and having observed the smoke arising

from the cabin, were attracted towards it, and lay in ambush on the mountain-side till night spread her curtain over the valley. When all was quiet they approached and entered, and the first notice the husband and father had of their presence was the gleam of the tomahawk that killed him in his bed. The leader of the band was the cruel and notorious half-breed Bengé, who was killed three years after not many miles from the same place, as he was making his way to Big Stone Gap with the Livingston captives. After scalping Mr. Scott, they murdered and scalped his five children, plundered and burned the cabin, took Mrs. Scott prisoner, and started back on their long journey to their towns beyond the Ohio. Her sufferings during this journey, over steep mountains and through deep and rapid streams, were indescribable. When, faint and weary and foot-sore, she failed to travel as rapidly as her captors desired, they would slap her in the face with the bloody scalps of her husband and children. Being a woman of great strength, activity and nerve, she bore up wonderfully, and even surprised the savages by her endurance.

After traveling about two hundred miles, and reaching one of their favorite hunting-grounds in Kentucky, not far from the Ohio, they stopped a few days to rest and hunt. It was decided among them that one of the Indians, when they reached their town on the Miami should have their captive for a wife, and hence he was designated to guard her while the rest were engaged in the hunt. Some hours after they had left, the Indian on guard fell into a profound sleep, seeing which, and making a noise that did not seem to disturb his slumbers, she determined to kill

him with his own tomahawk, which lay by his side, and then try to escape. She took the weapon and raised it above his head, but being weak and nervous from fatigue and distress of mind, she feared she might not be able to strike a fatal blow, and concluded to make an effort to escape. She made her way to a spring a short distance from the camp, waded along the branch to conceal her trail, and was soon safe from the pursuit of her guard in a thick canebrake. Hearing those who were hunting not a great way off, she waited until their whooping died in the distance, when she started out on the long and perilous journey toward the Cumberland mountain, the dim outline of which she had seen as she crossed an elevation. For weeks she wandered through the unbroken forest, without food and almost destitute of raiment, subsisting on berries, barks and roots, and many days wandering so much out of her way as to make but a mile or two. Finally coming to a river (supposed to be the Kentucky), she found a path on the bank, which she followed. One morning, while following the path up stream, she heard the hunting party meeting her, and seeing a large sycamore near the path, she stepped behind it, and fortunately found it hollow where she concealed herself till the Indians had passed. A day or two after this, and before she had reached the head waters of the stream, she heard the Indians on her trail with dogs. She crawled into a hollow log that lay across the path, over which some of them jumped their ponies and others passing around the end without discovering her.

After the Indians had disappeared she followed on very

cautiously till she came to where the path forked. This perplexed her somewhat, not knowing which to take. She finally took the left, which seemed to be the plainest, when a bird flew past, touched her shoulder, and lighted in the other path. She kept on, however, but had proceeded but a few steps when the bird repeated its singular action. This led her to stop and reflect, and coming to the conclusion that the bird was the spirit of one of her murdered children come to guide her through the wilderness, she took the other path, which proved to be the right one, and led her through what is now known as Pound Gap. She eventually made her way into Castle's Woods, where many of her relatives resided and still reside.

After some years Mrs. Scott married Mr. Thomas Johnson, for whom the county of that name in Tennessee was called. She raised a family of children, all of whom married and became useful and respectable members of society. She lived to an advanced age, and her ashes now repose on a little hillock near the old blacksmith shop, not far from the base of Clinch mountain at Hayter's Gap, in Russell county, Virginia.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BRIEF HISTORY OF TWO COLLEGES.

Emory and Henry.—As everything in connection with the origin of Emory and Henry will be interesting to the people of Southwestern Virginia, who, for forty years, have shared most largely of its benefits, the writer proposes to give all the little incidents that have come to his knowledge connected with its inception and final success.

In 1832 or 1833, Holston Conference appointed Rev. Creed Fulton an agent to solicit subscriptions to establish a college at Strawberry Plains, Tennessee. He worked at it faithfully for a year or two, and, although a man of indomitable energy, he became discouraged at the meagreness of the subscriptions, and returned to his home in Southwestern Virginia to rest a little while and see after his children, who had been left motherless in the meantime.

On his way home to Grayson county, Virginia, he called at the residence of his old friend Tobias Smyth, Esq., within a mile of the spot subsequently selected for the location of the College, to return a horse he had borrowed from that gentleman, and to this trivial incident, in all probability, may be traced the origin of Emory and Henry.

During the evening, Mr. Fulton made known his discouragements to Squire Smyth, who at once suggested that Conference ought to authorize the location of the College at any point within its bounds where the people would

subscribe most liberally, and then said: "If you will purchase my neighbor Crawford's farm for the purpose, which is a very fine one, and can be bought for much less than its value, I will give you \$500 to begin with." This exactly coincided with the views of Mr. Fulton, who, with those brilliant eyes of his sparkling with hope and determination, rose to his feet and exclaimed "Good! I'll make that \$500 worth 5,000 to the enterprise."

It was then arranged between them that Mr. Fulton should present the claims of the new enterprise at a sale to take place at the residence of Mr. John Smyth, lately deceased, which he did, and made a good impression. It was the first public effort in behalf of Emory and Henry, at the house now occupied by Mrs. Polly Smyth, about one mile north of the College.

Mr. Fulton and Squire Smyth then visited Colonel William Byars, who, without hesitating a moment, gave his name for \$600, and Mr. Alexander Findlay, of Abingdon, whose heart was also in the work, and who subsequently gave it nearly all his time and influence, as well as large loans from his own pocket, followed up with a subscription of \$500. This was a splendid beginning according to numbers, and resulted in a grand consummation.

The Conference of 1834 now came on at Knoxville, which Mr. Fulton attended, was reappointed agent, and Colonel Byars, Mr. Alexander Findlay and Squire Smyth were appointed an executive committee, with authority to purchase land and locate the College as soon as the collections of Mr. Fulton would justify it. Washington county, Virginia, having given a much larger subscription than any other, the Crawford farm, before spoken of, of six

hundred acres, was purchased at \$8.50 per acre cash, and the work commenced. It was deemed necessary to have a large farm, as the original design was to have a manual labor school, where the students could defray a portion of their expenses by agricultural or mechanical labor. But this plan wouldn't work and was relinquished in a year or two.

The farm having been purchased for cash, and the agent not being able to make collections as promptly as necessary, Mr. Findlay, on his own responsibility and at his own risk, borrowed \$5,000 from a bank in Knoxville. This virtually put the great work under way, which has been such a success and such a blessing to all this mountain region and to States adjacent, as well as to the whole South. The money being paid and the deed obtained, the executive committee took possession, employed a farmer and laborers, went to fencing and repairing and made a crop. They did not submit plans and specifications and let to the lowest bidder, but purchased the materials and employed skilful mechanics to superintend the work. Neither of the members of the committee had a knowledge of architecture, but Mr. Findlay drafted the plan of the College and Colonel Byars that of the Steward's Hall, both large and convenient buildings, though not quite as prepossessing in appearance as edifices of more modern style. They gave the work their unremitting attention, one or another of them daily superintending till the buildings were completed and the school in operation.

They took care to keep the credit of the institution at par, by paying the workmen and others promptly, and to do this, had to draw on their own private resources to the

amount of some \$12,000 at one time. Mr. Fulton performed his part faithfully and well, paid over as fast as he could collect, and thus to those four gentlemen, only one of them wealthy, and neither of them collegians, are the people of Southwestern Virginia indebted for Emory and Henry College, one of the best and most flourishing literary institutions in the South or out of it—a College costing about \$25,000, now valued at \$100,000, and comparatively out of debt. Messrs. Byars, Smyth, Findlay and Fulton all lived to see the fruition of their labors, cares and sacrifices, but are now all “gathered to their fathers,” while the noble institution they so largely contributed to found will be a monument to their generous devotion while one brick of the superstructure shall rest upon another.

The enterprise, as already stated, was started in 1834, the corner-stone laid in 1836, and the school, under the management of Rev. Charles Collins, in full blast in 1838.

President Collins was popular and successful, and built up the school very rapidly. He resigned in 1852, and was succeeded by Rev. E. E. Wiley, D. D., who had been a professor in the institution almost from the beginning, and under whose continued management to the present day it has enjoyed a reputation and success of which he, in common with the Holston Conference, may justly feel proud. The school all these years has had the benefit of Professor Langley's scholarly attainments; and Professors Davis, Buchanan and Vawter, who so ably fill their several chairs in the faculty, were all distinguished graduates of the institution, as was, also, Professor William E. Peters, now Professor of Latin in the University of Virginia.

Martha Washington.—Martha Washington College, at Abingdon, has a reputation and efficiency equal to any Female College in the South, and promises to become one of the most popular and prosperous. The idea of its erection originated in the minds of a few individual members of the Abingdon Lodge of Odd Fellows, all of them without patronage, influence or means. However, believing themselves to be right and the enterprise plausible and worthy of persistent effort, they kept the ball in motion. The magnitude of the work to be undertaken by a body of not more than fifty men, most of them living from “hand to mouth,” was regarded by the masses as visionary, if not absolutely preposterous. Those who submitted the wild proposition, as it was called, like the “Sainted Martyr,” kept “pegging away,” notwithstanding the ridicule and animadversions of wiser heads, until at length, to test the matter and see if there was anything feasible in it, a committee was appointed by the Lodge to consider and report upon the proposition—with the purpose, no doubt, by the majority, to put the question to rest forever; but the report of the committee brought up discussion, discussion begat inquiry, inquiry resulted in effort, and effort eventually struggled to success. A subscription was started in the Lodge, when four members—Messrs. Beverly R. Johnston, T. G. McConnell, William King Heiskell and D. C. Dunn—neither of them wealthy, each subscribed \$600, and some fifteen or twenty others from \$100 up to \$500 each. This was a promising beginning, when the

whole Lodge became canvassers, and the aggregate amount soon ran up to \$25,000.

Plans were now entered into, twelve acres of land purchased at one hundred dollars per acre, contracts concluded, and the walls of an immense brick structure erected and covered with tin. Here the fund became exhausted, the work suspended, and before an effort was made to resume the walls became warped and cracked, and the whole edifice, after an expenditure of \$30,000, was discovered to be a failure and abandoned. The spirit, however, to have a college had gone abroad, and "agitate, agitate, agitate," became the watch-word. The Lodge, finding itself hopelessly scotched and unable to proceed, finally determined to shift the labor and responsibility to shoulders better able to bear them, and proposed to turn the job over to the Holston Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. After a vast amount of discussion, consideration and casting about—weighing the chances of success and estimating the advantages to be derived—that body took charge of it, assumed the payment of a debt of \$10,000, relinquished the half-finished edifice, disposed of the materials for about \$8,000, redeeded the land to its former owner, and purchased the splendid mansion and grounds of Colonel T. L. Preston in the suburbs of the village, at \$22,000, payable in five equal instalments. All these transactions occurred from 1850 to 1859, and in 1860 the school was started under the presidency of Rev. William A. Harris, A. M., at present in charge of the Wesleyan Female Institute at Staunton, the only Female College, perhaps, under the patronage of the Baltimore Conference.

Martha Washington opened prosperously, matriculating, the first regular term, one hundred and fifty young ladies, fifty of whom were boarders. The war coming on, the patronage became precarious and fluctuating, and rumors of raids frequently scattered the pupils like partridges on the mountain. President Harris, by unflagging energy, devotion and skill, kept the machinery in motion, paid by his labors, with the assistance of an agent, a portion of the debt—which now amounted to thirty-odd thousand dollars—and gave the institution, both at home and abroad, a reputation equal to any school in the South or the Union. He was succeeded in 1865 by Rev. B. Arbogast, A. M., under whose management, from the pressure of debt and other causes, it was not as prosperous as it had been, though the curriculum was of the highest grade, and the faculty all that could be desired.

President Arbogast resigned in 1872, and was succeeded by Major R. W. Jones, of Petersburg, under whose management, after a struggle for life, it is now marching on, it is hoped and believed, to an assured and brilliant success—most of the debt having been liquidated, and its halls again filling up with youth and beauty.

The establishment of Martha Washington has been the incentive for starting two other female colleges in Abingdon—one under the patronage of the Presbyterian and the other under that of the Roman Catholic Church. The former is called the “Stonewall Jackson Institute,” is most admirably managed under the presidency of Mr. T. D. Davidson, and deserves a much more liberal patronage than it is receiving, and the latter, under the title of

“Academy of Visitation,” managed by a Mother Superior and a corps of accomplished Sisters. These schools are all well patronized, but not half as liberally as they should be, situated, as they are, in one of the most healthy and romantic localities in the South, and in the midst of a highly moral and refined society

CHAPTER XXXVI.

INCIDENTS OF THE WAR.

For the purpose of avoiding monotony as far as possible, the writer will venture to enlarge the circle in which his thoughts have been revolving, and give the reader a chapter of incidents growing out of the late "unpleasantness," showing, in some sort, the manner in which our "beloved brethren" beyond the border waged war upon the South—a war inaugurated ostensibly for the purpose, as they termed it, of perpetuating "the best government the world ever saw," but really for the emancipation of the "man and brother"—to wrest from the Southern people, at the point of the bayonet, that which was guaranteed to them by the compact under which the South became part and parcel of the Union. But it is not proposed to argue this question here and now, as it has been settled for "time and eternity," but to call to mind some of the incidents of the struggle between might and right—in other words, to give an incident or two, partially coming under the observation of the writer, and as related to him by eye-witnesses.

There is not a man in all the country, it may be presumed, who has not heard of John Morgan, the gallant Kentuckian, who was such a terror to the "Boys in Blue," and who thrashed them out in more than forty battles with less than half their numbers. Well, to make a long story short, he had his headquarters at the residence of

Judge John A. Campbell in the vicinity of Abingdon for some time, and the writer was proud to have the pleasure and honor of his acquaintance. Abingdon being located immediately upon the great highway from North to South, as well as from East to West, subjected it not only to the passing and foraging squadrons of our own army, but to the more fearful and destructive raids of the enemy. From the time of General Burnside's entrance into East Tennessee, in September, 1863, to the close of the war in April, 1865, our people had scarcely an hour of quiet, and were constantly kept, both night and day, in the most unhappy and anxious suspense.

All the men of the mountains capable of bearing arms, as well as many who were incapable, and who had not fallen upon the bloody fields along the Rappahannock and Rapidan, were with Lee and Johnston hundreds of miles away, while their homes and interests, their wives and little ones, were all at the mercy of our own stragglers and traitors, and in perpetual dread of the approach of the lawless and inhuman raiders of Averill, Burbridge, Stoneman and others, whose numbers enabled them to form a cordon around us as fearful as the folds of an anaconda.

Shortly after Burnside's entrance into and occupation of Knoxville, one hundred and forty miles west of us, the gallant General Morgan, with his handful of brave Kentuckians and Mississippians, fought his way through interposing legions, and arrived at Abingdon for the purpose of recruiting his worn-out men and horses. Knowing that his mere name had terror enough in it to hold ten times his number at bay, and finding that the enemy

lingered upon his trail, after a few days of rest the bugle called his men together, and he returned to meet the foe as he slowly and cautiously advanced toward the Virginia line. Arriving at Greenville, Tennessee, midway between Abingdon and Knoxville, after a fatiguing march of a day and night, he bivouacked his little command of five hundred men a short distance from the village, and entered the town with his staff to spend the night under the roof of a friend—a luxury he but rarely enjoyed.

By some means—and by whom has never been satisfactorily ascertained—information was communicated to the enemy sixteen miles off that General Morgan and his staff were sleeping in the village, while his worn and wearied men were encamped some half-mile or more away. Notwithstanding scouts were out and the town supposed to be securely picketed, overwhelming numbers of the enemy, conducted by treachery, arrived before the dawn and quietly surrounded the place, thus cutting off the General and his staff from the little force outside.

Being aroused from his slumbers by the lady of the house, and informed that the town was swarming with Blue-coats, and the house surrounded, the General dressed and armed himself very calmly and quietly, and said to the few officers with him: "Gentlemen, they have at last caught us napping, through the treachery of pretended friends, but don't surrender, and let us sell our lives as dearly as possible." They then rushed out in a body and attempted to cut their way through, but were of course soon overpowered by numbers. Two of the officers escaped, four or five were captured, but John Morgan, with

a revolver in each hand, kept a host of assailants at bay for some time, and was finally murdered by a mob that hadn't the courage to take him alive. Thus ended the brilliant career of John H. Morgan, when as brave a soul as ever tenanted a human body winged its flight to another world. As soon as it was known that life was extinct—and some say before—his body was thrown across the back of a horse and paraded through the streets amid the jeers and jibes of a regiment of Michiganders, a score of whom would not have faced him when alive. His body was brought to Abingdon, where his wife was then sojourning, and buried. After a short time it was removed to a vault in Holywood cemetery, near Richmond, and eventually to Lexington, Kentucky, where it now reposes with the dust of kindred who had gone before.

General Basil W. Duke, his brother-in-law, succeeded General Morgan, who was as popular with the command as his gallant and lamented predecessor. Not long after, most of the few scattered troops who had been left here to guard the railroad were ordered to other points, which, being known by the enemy in Tennessee, Stoneman and Burbridge, with a cavalry force of some five thousand, made their celebrated raid. It was a cold night in December, 1864, when the whole face of the country was covered with ice and sleet. It was not positively known that the enemy was anywhere near, although a continual dread of their coming pervaded the public mind. They entered the quiet village stealthily, though they might have done so boldly, and surrounded nearly every house, before the inhabitants were aware of their presence. In less than an

hour every store in the place was broken open and ransacked, and what the marauders could not carry away they destroyed. The main body then passed on a mile or two, where they remained during the night and part of the next day, leaving a company of about forty men, under the command of a man by the name of Wyatt, to prosecute the pillage and burn the town. The only persons here being women and children, with a few old men and boys, this was no hazardous undertaking.

Wyatt being a native of the place, and having been arrested here in the early part of the war under the suspicion of being a spy, he took peculiar pleasure in wreaking his vengeance upon those for whom he entertained feelings of enmity and revenge. After they had gorged their appetites for plunder, they applied the torch, and in a very short time a large portion of the town was in flames, and the women and children frantically rushing from their burning dwellings. All this while Wyatt and his *brave* and *humane* companions were riding exultingly through the streets, enjoying the alarm and anguish of their helpless victims. In the midst of their exultation a wild yell was heard at one end of the street, and in a moment *thirteen* of Morgan's men dashed in among the *forty* mounted Federals, when the latter, instead of meeting the little handful of scouts like men, turned and fled, a dozen pursued by one. In less than ten minutes Wyatt and four of his men, who had been exhibiting their gallant daring among shrieking women and children, bit the dust, twenty were captured and relieved of their horses, arms and trappings, and the balance chased right into the ranks of the five thousand

bivouacked but a couple of miles off. This, although it may never before have been written, will be recorded in future history as one of the most gallant feats of the war.

The raiders then passed on, left some forty or fifty of their number near the neighboring town of Marion, where they met with General Duke, with less than a regiment of followers, went to the Saltworks and made war on the kettles, and hurriedly passed on through the mountains back into Tennessee, leaving their line of march strewn with those for whom our people had to *dig holes in the ground*, stopped in their career, some by being frozen to death, and others by the bullets of the thirteen scouts, who never quit the trail till the enemy re-entered their own lines.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE STREAMS AND SPRINGS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY.

This is a subject which, to the casual reader, may seem to involve but little of interest, yet the writer must confess that nothing in this hill country has excited more of his wonder and admiration than its streams and springs, but the purpose of the present chapter is to show the magnificent water-power the Lord has given to a people whose lands are pregnant with minerals and whose mountains are filled with coal and covered with timber, unexcelled in quality and variety in any part of the broad Union. In a preceding chapter a general outline of the streams is given, or rather the remarkable fact that the three larger, which drain the county, all run from east to west, while all the rest, and they are almost countless, run north and south, but as no particular description is given of them, it is proposed to do so now, for the benefit of readers who may see and appreciate their wonderful advantages. The three principal streams, as has been before stated, are the North, Middle and South Forks of Holston, not varying much in size, each of them, perhaps, averaging one hundred yards in width, running ordinarily five miles an hour. The distance in a straight line of the North and South Forks, from their sources in Wythe county to their confluence at Kingsport, in Tennessee, is about eighty miles, but their windings of course make them many miles longer.

The Middle Fork is only about half the length of the others, uniting with the South Fork about six miles southeast of Abingdon. They all head in high table land crossing the country north and south connecting two ranges of mountains with transverse courses, and not more than a mile from the sources of streams on the opposite side of the "divide" that run in an exactly opposite direction. That "divide" is Mount Airy, the highest point crossed by a railroad in Virginia.

After those streams unite at Kingsport, they still retain the name of Holston, and form a beautiful river, from three hundred to four hundred yards wide, clear, rapid, deep and serpentine. Some twenty-five miles below Knoxville a comparatively small stream, called "Little Tennessee," comes into the Holston at right angles, when the latter loses its name and takes that of the former, and from this point till it empties into the Ohio it is known by the name of Tennessee. The three Forks of Holston are wildly romantic, at one moment dashing madly between beetling precipices, and the next winding gently through green meadows—again chafing and pelting against the basis of the mountains, and then dashing away and hiding themselves among the lesser hills, or smoothly gliding among tall hemlocks and sugar maples.

Many of the smaller streams, which run at right angles with and feed the three larger, are remarkable for their weird beauty and the rapid flow of their waters. As before stated, their name is legion, but the writer must give a short description of a few of them. Wolf creek, the eastern prong of which passes through Abingdon, and has

its source but little over a mile from the village, attains sufficient size to propel a mill in that short distance, and although not more than ten miles long, it more than doubles its dimensions, and plunges down a rocky declivity of some one hundred feet in as many yards, into a secluded little valley, through which it goes dancing into the South Fork of Holston. Opposite the source of this, and not more than three hundred paces from it, but running in exactly the opposite direction, is a stream about the same size and with the same general features, known by the name of Tool's creek, only about six miles long, which reaches the North Fork by a succession of leaps, having a fall of something like one hundred feet to the mile its whole length. In this creek, for two miles or more, hemmed in by precipitous hills, covered with a splendid growth of timber, there is a succession of beautiful cascades, which sport and sparkle in the sunlight, often embellished with the colors of the prism. Two miles west of this, having its source in the same range of hills, is another near the same size and length, which, for the grandeur of the thing, seems to have united its cascades into one; and, to show what a big waterfall may look like, it leaps more than one hundred feet at two bounds, and then flows off as modestly as if it had no sublime attractions.

Two miles further west, heading in the same range, running in the same direction and about the same distance, is a third, varying but little from the others in size, also with numerous cascades, and among them one, as if to outdo its neighbor, makes a single plunge of seventy

feet. Winding along the margin of the latter, sometimes on one side and then on the other, is a well graded mud pike, and each of the others has a tolerable wagon road from one end to the other. These streams, being fed by innumerable springs, grow very rapidly in their short career, furnish sufficient power for any sort or amount of machinery, and are rarely diminished by drouth.

Still farther west, ten or a dozen miles, heading in the same range and running in the same direction, is another stream somewhat larger than the others, called Abram's creek, which flows its whole length through a wild and rich but uncultivated country, with a noisy and maddened rush. On its way to the North Fork it passes through a deep, dark and gloomy chasm, bounded by high perpendicular walls of solid limestone, and fretting and foaming like an impatient steed, it pitches over a preeipice sixty feet to a narrow ledge, and thence another plunge of forty feet into a large round basin worn deep in the solid rock at the base. This is one of the most magnificent waterfalls in all this hill country, yet these scenes are so common, and this one being somewhat out of the way, but few of the citizens of the county have ever visited it. From below it looks like an unbroken sheet—a perfect bridal veil. When the stream is at its lowest stage, it falls into the basin in the form of a heavy mist, and when the sun is in a certain position the cataract midway is spanned by a brilliant crescent.

It is a remarkable peculiarity that immediately opposite the streams above alluded to, as well as many intermediate ones not named, and having their sources on the opposite

side of the same range of hills, and running in exactly the opposite direction, are precisely similar streams, having the same characteristics. The sources of most of them are not a stone's throw apart.

It has been stated in this as well as in a preceding chapter, that the Holstons run from east to west, the North Fork sweeping the base of Clinch and the South Fork the base of Iron mountain. On top of the former rises a stream called Brumley, which runs due east along its summit several miles, and then making a short curve runs several miles due south to the North Fork. Immediately opposite the source of Brumley, and running about the same distance in the same direction at the base of Iron mountain, is a stream called Beaver Dam, which makes the same sort of a curve nearly opposite the curve in Brumley, and in about the same distance finds its way into the South Fork. These streams are almost exactly alike, their waters never become more than slightly discolored, are almost as cold as the springs in the valleys, and are filled with speckled trout.

It has taken so much space to describe a few of the streams, there is not room enough left to say much about the springs. It may be said, however, they are everywhere, from the bottoms of the lowest valleys to the summits of the highest mountains. There are a score in this country that afford sufficient water for light machinery, and two or three still larger that have mills within fifty yards of the fountain-heads, and which are never still for want of water. There are several so deep that no bottom has ever been found. Among the rest there is one that

ebbs and flows at regular intervals. This is a little singular at an elevation of two thousand feet above the level of the sea, but those who are familiar with Natural Philosophy and understand the principle of a siphon, will not be at a loss to account for the phenomenon.

Mineral springs are numerous and of all varieties. On one farm in this county and within a circle of less than a quarter of a mile, there are six springs, viz: a chalybeate, alum, magnesia, sulphur, limestone and freestone. It is doubtful whether any other part of the continent can furnish as great a variety in as small an area, and they are all bold and ever-flowing. They are called Washington Springs, fifteen miles east of Abingdon, near Glade Spring depot, and are becoming quite a place of resort for both invalids and seekers of pleasure. The "Seven Springs," noted for Alum Mass, are within three miles of the latter group.

The foregoing should suffice to convince the reader that Southwestern Virginia is most bountifully supplied with water—none of your sluggish, lazy streams, but those that go leaping and romping off, as if in a hurry to mingle with the Father of Waters, and wake the echos of the mountains as they tumble and dash along toward their destination.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

STORY OF A HAUNTED BALL ROOM.

This chapter is introduced merely for the purpose of showing that credulity has not been entirely rooted out of the world by the march of mind and intellectual culture, and only needs, in the most intelligent communities, the aid of necromancy to make it develop itself.

A number of years ago—perhaps in the summer of 1840—the quiet and orderly people of Abingdon and vicinity were startled and bewildered by strange and mysterious noises in a large frame building in the centre of the place, occupied as a grog-shop and for other disreputable and obscene purposes. It was a place at which the most degraded white people of both sexes, negroes and lewd characters nightly congregated to carry on their Bacchanalian revels and other immoral and vicious pastimes. It was just such a building as ghosts are supposed to love to inhabit, where the nights are dark and drear, and the storm-fiends are wandering abroad. It was a very large one-story structure, built expressly for a ball-room, but at the time of the occurrences now to be related, the one large room had a bar partitioned off in one corner, and a small bed-room in another, and the whole ceiled inside with plank instead of laths and plaster. There was no access to the attic or loft save through two stove-pipe holes, and these were too small for even a child to pass through.

One dark and stormy night in midsummer, after all honest people should have retired to rest, the people of the village were still, and the negroes and their more degraded white companions were sweltering and snoring on the floor of the old ball-room, not only the inmates, but the sleepers in adjacent tenements were roused from their slumbers by strange and startling sounds. While from one part of the large, dark room came deep and suppressed tones of apparent agony, from another came the clank of chains, and from a third such groans as might be uttered by a strangling giant—not all at once, but alternating—and to lend horror to the unearthly intonations, an occasional shriek floated out on the murky night air. Men in wonder gathered in groups, each asking the other for an explanation, whilst others, in larger companies, searched the premises inside and out for a solution of the mysterious clamor.

It is said if you touch a tree on which a katydid is singing its nocturnal ditty, its voice will be hushed in an instant. So with the invisible occupants of the ball-room. While search was being made inside, the room was as silent as a charnel-house, but the moment the searchers left it, the hideous uproar rolled on.

This didn't last but for a night or a week, but for months, until rumors, many of them of course greatly exaggerated, had gone abroad all over the country, and distant journals speculated upon the mysterious manifestations in the haunted ball-room at Abingdon. Night after night, *not alone, but in company with others*, has the writer of these pages stood on the outside of the door of that demon-infested room, and seen strong-nerved men turn pale and tremble as the infernal racket swept on.

At length the disturbance became insufferable, and a number of citizens pledged themselves to unravel the riddle, if within the power of mortal men to do it. But, as it was pretty well understood that the ghosts (for there seemed to be legions of them) were not communicative to multitudes, a number of persons divided off in pairs, and arranged to try it two at a time, occupying the small bedroom partitioned off in one corner, which was furnished with a bed, table, chairs, &c., and a big double-barrel shotgun. Accordingly, the first adventure fell upon two men with whom all the citizens were acquainted, one of them, by the way, a brother of the noted Senator Brownlow, and the other a very sedate but superstitious man, who had long lived in a building in front of the ball-room, to which the latter formed an L. They repaired to the room soon after nightfall, each armed with a revolver and provided with a pack of cards and a bottle of "mountain dew," and after playing a game or two of poker, imbibing a little of the "dew," and whistling jigs to keep their courage up, they retired to rest, persuading themselves to hope, if not to believe, that the mysterious visitants would scarcely dare to hold their accustomed revel in such a presence. But they were mistaken. About the "witching hour of night" when ghosts most love to wander, and when all was still save the sighing night-wind as it chanted its mournful cadences through the open crevices, they were startled from their uneasy slumbers by noises to which, as they described them, bedlam, in its wildest ravings, were as gentle as the breathings of a lute. Their light was burning brightly, and as they sprang from the bed, and

looking at each other suspiciously for a moment, as if each supposed the other to be an apparition, standing face to face, dumfounded and trembling, while the fearful tumult rolled on in the outer room, they were soon brought to a realization of their surroundings. Without exchanging a word, or attempting to make an investigation of the matter they were there to solve, they both seemed to be moved by the same impulse at the same moment, and went through a window almost as rapidly as if they had been shot from a mortar. Next day they had marvelous stories to tell of the fearful things they had seen and heard, of what they said to the ghosts and the ghosts said to them, but they could never after be either coaxed or driven into that part of town after daylight had disappeared. They have both long since gone to the land of shadows, and carried with them to the tomb an implicit belief in the supernatural.

Two others, who claimed to have more nerve and daring than their predecessors, took their turn the following night, with about the same result, as far as any satisfactory discovery was made. Like the others, they claimed to have seen and talked with the hobgoblins, and to have driven them from the building, but two or three gentlemen who entered the little bed-room early next morning were persuaded that the driving was the other way, as two pairs of boots and two hats had been left, which were about the size of those worn by the men who had scared away the ghosts. From every indication, another couple had escaped through the same widow with about the same speed.

The third night—and there is said to be a charm in that magic number—the adventure was rather more interest-

ing than either of the preceding. The two persons now selected were in middle life, and had long occupied rooms in the front building, in close proximity to that in which the ghosts held their nightly carnival. It was believed they would solve the knotty problem, if it really were not supernatural, and within the scope of mortal ken. One of them was tall and as straight as an Indian, possessed of more than ordinary intelligence and dignity, supposed to be a stranger to fear, ridiculed the idea of ghosts and all sorts of superstition, and scouted the notion of a supernatural agency producing a natural sound, upon philosophic grounds. The other was the writer of these pages. It was a dark, drizzly night, the mercury up toward blood heat, and the fitful flow of wind that found ingress through the broken panes came heated as the breath of a furnace. We entered at the hour of ten at night—just two hours before the usual visits of the apparitions, *that I, for my part, was not over-anxious to hear or see, or communicate with in any manner or form.* My companion was armed with a revolver, a bottle of apple-jack, and a Bible, and I with a Presbyterian Confession of Faith, a copy of the National Intelligencer, and two North Carolina tallow candles—two-thirds cotton and the balance fat.

Neither of us belonged to a church, but before we got out of the building, as the sequel will show, we would have felt more comfortable if we had belonged to all the denominations and auxiliary societies in Christendom. The night being so excessively warm and oppressive, we divested ourselves of outward adornments to an unmentionable extent, and sat down to read and meditate upon

the looked-for developments of the coming midnight, and to train our nerves for the tension to which they might be subjected. I had selected the Confession of Faith and the National Intelligencer, because I had heard that a coroner's jury had once decided that an unknown dead man was both a Christian and a gentleman, because the Confession was found in one of his pockets and the Intelligencer in the other. The ghosts, therefore, if they were as intelligent and moral as ghosts ought to be, might arrive at the same conclusion as to my character, and deal all the more gently with me.

My companion, with the view, it may be presumed, of employing our waiting hours the more profitably, read aloud from the Word, which he had turned down in dog-ears, and instead of dispelling our gloomy apprehensions by the soul-stirring Songs of Solomon, or the grander inspirations of Isaiah or Jeremiah, chose the sombre stories of the Witch of Endor and the rattling of the dry bones in the valley of Jehosaphat—themes, as I thought, in my then state of mind, not peculiarly appropriate to the place or the occasion.

After reading all such portions of Scripture as were surcharged with ghosts, hobgoblins and frightful incantations, or as many of them as his memory could conveniently call up, he very reverently closed the volume, and with uplifted eyes and pious emotion, very much surprised me by saying "Let us pray!" We knelt down, and solemn as were the occasion and the circumstances, it certainly would have been a scene more ludicrous than sacred to a spectator, had he seen us kneeling amid barrels and bottles of villainous

whisky, each attired in our nether garments, and *nothing else!* I have often since wondered how I refrained from irreverent merriment in the very presence of the dreaded demons of the haunted ball-room, as my companion, with lengthened visage and solemn accents, read the sacred page and uttered his supplications, with nothing upon him but his spectacles and but one garment more than Adam wore when he made that apron of fig leaves.

Our devotions ended, we retired, not to *rest*, but to await the coming of the mysterious visitants, who thus far had proved the "masters of the situation." True to their habits, as the echo of the last peal of the iron tongue of time that hung in the Courthouse steeple floated away on the midnight air, the invisible intruders announced their advent by manifestations not less hideous than those which startled the ear of Tam o'Shanter at "auld Kirk Alloway." My companion bounded from the bed as if he had been upon the apex of a volcano, and I felt as if I should have liked to crawl into an augur-hole and pull it in after me. He grasped the lighted candle and boldly stepped out into the large, dark room where the ghostly revel was in full blast, I gallantly bringing up the rear with feelings about as pleasant as a malefactor may be supposed to enjoy on the way from the prison to the scaffold. My companion, however, marched boldly to the centre of the room, and holding the candle above his head with one hand, and lifting the other with his eyes toward the ceiling, exclaimed, in measured and solemn tones: "*In the name of God and high heaven, who are you and what do you want?*" This was enough for the ghosts, enough for me, and enough for

my companion. In an instant the light was extinguished, and the din that followed was indescribably horrible. Finding in the darkness that my friend had left me, I looked towards the window, and the last I saw of him that night was his *flag of truce streaming out behind* as he leaped through the window, in which performance I was not an instant behind him. Next morning the tracks of four bare feet were found in the mud beneath the window, and full garments for two bipeds hanging on chairs in the bed-room. I cannot vouch for my friend's subsequent adventures, as he moved away and became high in official station "away down South in Dixie," but it was my first and last attempt to hunt up and ventilate an apparition.

Our adventure and failure becoming public, no more "hunting in couples" was done in that direction, and the ghosts were permitted to revel on in unmolested freedom till they grew weary of their occupation. A few months after, it leaked out that two or three citizens, for the purpose of breaking up the immoral and vicious habits of the frequenters of the doggery and brothel in the ball-room, had fixed up contrivances between the weather-boarding and plank ceiling, which were operated with strings and wires from the garret, and with a "dumb-bell," chains and a wooden ball at the end of a rope, made the mysterious noises which were supposed, even by some intelligent people, to be supernatural. They had sawed out a hole through the weather-boarding in an upper room of the front building, then in the occupancy of one of them, which gave them entrance into the garret over the ball-room, which none suspected, all being satisfied that there

was no way of getting into that part of the house except through one of the stope-pipe holes, which, as before said, were too small even to admit a child. The whole thing was ingeniously arranged and managed, and completely successful in breaking up the worst den of iniquity that ever infested the refined and orderly town of Abingdon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

MONTICELLO AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

As but few persons, comparatively, in Southwestern Virginia have visited Monticello, I may be pardoned for introducing a short description here, which may interest a reader here and there.

On my way to attend the commencement exercises of Wesleyan Female Institute at Staunton, in June, 1870, an accident to the train caused a misconnection at Lynchburg. I had my choice between waiting for the passenger train next morning, or taking the freight train just before sundown and going on to Charlottesville that night. I chose the latter, and stowing myself away among bales and boxes and a crowd of sweltering and highly perfumed "wards of the nation," in the conductor's caboose, I had the pleasure of jolting into Charlottesville about an hour after midnight, sought, and after sundry thumps and a volley of mild imprecations, succeeded in rousing a stupid Senagambian of the male persuasion, who struck a light and conducted me to a room about as far from the base as the statue on the monument at Baltimore, where I soon forgot all my troubles. It seemed to me that I hadn't been asleep more than an hour when I began to dream of cyclones and earthquakes, and on being aroused to consciousness, discovered that my dreams originated in the whanging and deafening clangor of the breakfast gong,

which a stumpy negro was banging with as much blood-thirsty earnestness as if he had been "a heathen Chinee" in the van of a Celestial battle. After bestowing a blessing upon him in particular, and the long-tailed barbarians in general, who invented that noisest and most diabolical of all *musical* instruments, I descended the quarter of a mile of stairway and was guided to the breakfast room by the savor of fried ham and eggs, which, in spite of Yankee innovation, is still, and I hope ever will be, a favorite morning dish in Virginia. After doing my duty to the dollar's worth I was expected to get on the outside of, I sauntered out in search of any stray zephyr that might find its way into the furnace-like borough from the niegh-boring hills.

I was sixty-five miles nearer my journey's end than I would have been at Lynchburg, but could reach it no sooner than if I had laid over in the latter city, and had to wait till two P. M. for the train that was to take me to Staunton. Casting about for something of interest to occupy the tedious hours of that long midsummer day, with the mercury up to the very top of the thermometer—and it would have been higher had the instrument been longer—a strange gentleman, also on probation, proposed a walk to Monticello, two or three miles distant. This exactly suited my notions of economizing time and of gratifying a mania for ancient relics and memories, and off we started. All the way along that serpentine and ascending road, my thoughts were busy with the immortal man who had so often walked it in the better days of the Republic, and not a rock or a tree did we pass that I did

not imagine that the great statesman and philosopher had sat upon and rested under, and could not resist the inclination to take a seat upon every eligible rock, and to rest a moment under every accessible tree, for the simple reason that Mr. Jefferson may have done so in his frequent walks to and from the village.

Everybody knows, or ought to know, that Monticello, as the first syllable of the name indicates, is a mountain, and after a weary walk of an hour or more, we arrived in the gap on the summit where the road crosses, and where a pure, cold spring leaps from the earth and dashes joyously away down the mountain-side. Near the spring stands an old walnut tree, with a protruding root forming a rustic seat, and naturally supposing that Mr. Jefferson had often sat there, I dropped into it as a matter of course. As the mansion was still a quarter of a mile or more away, and upon still higher ground, we remained long enough to cool off and reflect upon that good providence which distills so pure and refreshing a beverage exactly where it is most needed.

After a rest of some ten or fifteen minutes, we proceeded upward along the comb of the mountain, and between the spring and the mansion, in a secluded spot in the forest, we passed the grave of the great sleeper, inclosed with high brick walls, and marked by a rough shaft of native granite, selected and fashioned by Mr. Jefferson himself, to perpetuate his name and his deeds to coming generations. Shaking off the sombre thoughts awakened by the the charnel-house and the garnered harvest of the Great Reaper in that silent spot, we hurried on, and were soon

at the mansion, moss-covered, dilapidated and criminally neglected. The building is of the French chateau style of architecture, a mass of angles with a dome on top and filled with narrow passages, intricate stairways, dark rooms and quaint niches and closets. The upper rooms, small and illy ventilated, were originally lighted from the roof, but shingles having been substituted for glass, the rooms are now as dark and gloomy as the cells of a prison. I was told that the estate originally comprised fourteen thousand acres, and that the improvements were very near the centre, and cost, including the grading of the site, eighty-five thousand dollars. And just here I will take occasion to say that while Mr. Jefferson was a great philosopher and statesman, and knew all about the construction of laws, constitutions and other fabrics of political science, he seemed to have had but slight conceptions of comfort and economy in the construction of a house to live in. The mansion on Monticello is, in my opinion, a monument of bad taste in architecture, as are also the University at Charlottesville and the Capital at Richmond, the plans for which, it is generally understood, were fashioned and furnished by him.

Notwithstanding Mr. Jefferson had fourteen thousand acres upon which to exercise his skill and display his taste in architecture, he seemed to have a passion for burrowing in the earth, and as a consequence the summit of Monticello is as full of subterranean passages as a mole-infested potato-patch.

But to return to the building. At the cost of a mere stipend, we were conducted all through the mansion by an

intelligent and communicative old gentleman, in whom we realized the personification of the "Wandering Jew," and were more than compensated for the fatiguing walk, in the gratification of seeing the many relics of the great man's household, to say nothing of the magnificent view of the surrounding country. Among other things, was the staff from which the National flag floated on the dome of his house during the term of his Presidency, and the seat of the sulky in which he rode to Philadelphia a short time before he drafted the Declaration of Independence. In addition to these were a chair or two, mirrors, bedsteads, &c., all of which have been permitted to remain, and, simple and common-place as they are, had an absorbing interest to me. It may be a weakness, and probably is, to attach any value to such things; but such is my nature and I can't change it, and wouldn't if I could.

After exploring the house from cellar to attic, up and down narrow, dark and winding stairways, together with the wine-vault and its quaint machinery for elevating the bottles to the rooms above, we took a stroll through the grounds, from which the most splendid view is to be had. I lost my bearings, not being able to exactly distinguish the cardinal points of the compass, but in the direction I took to be east the bright and beautiful Rivanna dodged in and out among the hills, till its rushing waters disappeared in the distance like a silver ribbon streaming out upon the wind. And then toward the north, or at least to the left, lay the town of Charlottesville, nestling almost at the base of Monticello, with its domes and steeples all glistening in the rays of the morning sun, and farther on, lifting

itself high up among the clouds, lay the long line of the Blue Ridge, dotted here and there with cultivated fields and rural homesteads, presenting an appearance not unlike a bed-quilt of the olden time, with patch-work of varied shades and hues. And then in the opposite direction, taking in the counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna and Louisa, and portions of Buckingham and perhaps Goochland and Cumberland, the view is grand beyond my weak powers of description. A mountain in Buckingham, said to be sixty-five miles distant, is plain to the naked vision, standing out like a solitary watch-tower in all the plain.

I cannot attempt to describe the view, but I loved to contemplate it, not only on account of its intrinsic beauty and grandeur, but because Mr. Jefferson admired and loved to contemplate it, and reared his habitation where he could live and die amid those gorgeous surroundings.

Charlottesville, with its four hundred students, splendid adjacent water-power, and rich surrounding country, is a pleasant, refined and quite a pretty place, but it has not profited as much as it should have done with its superior advantages. A dozen enterprising men with capital could make a second Lowell of it, but it has been content with the advantages accruing from the University, and with the honor of reposing in the shadow of Monticello.

CHAPTER XL.

BARON TEU BEUF, THE FRENCH NOBLEMAN WHO SETTLED IN
RUSSELL COUNTY NEAR THE CLOSE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

A few years ago Mr James Bickley, of Castle's Woods, sent to the writer as a relic of the olden time an immensely large cavalry boot, which had been in his family for more than half a century. It was made of sole leather, and the heel fastened on with eight-penny nails. It had evidently been worn over another boot, and if not bullet-proof, certainly snake-proof. The owner of this boot—Baron Teu Beuf—was not a pioneer of Castle's Woods, but emigrated there in 1792 or 1793, a number of years after the last Indian depredations in that section. Being a prominent man in his own country, he became involved in the heated political broils of 1792, and had to leave to save his head. His first destination was London, where he owned property, which he exchanged with a citizen of that city by the name of Richard Smith, for a large boundary of land which the latter owned in what was then Russell, now Wise county. This boundary comprised 55,000 acres north of and lying on Clinch and Guerst rivers.

When he came to this country and found his land all an unbroken and unsettled wilderness, he became dissatisfied, and resided for about a year at Dickensonville, then the county seat of Russell. It does not appear that he intended to plant a colony, as has been supposed, as the only persons accompanying him were his wife, son and two male

and two female servants, all white. The only property he brought with him now recollected, consisted of a wood-saw and two grind-stones. He was evidently in straitened circumstances, as, at the end of the first year, he removed to his claim and erected his cabin on a place now known as Sugar Hill, north of Clinch river, in Wise county, the residence of the late Mr. S. H. Bickley.

The Baron, with the help of his son and servants, soon made a little clearing about his cabin, and if he had lived would doubtless have opened out a large and valuable farm. Having been a nobleman in his own country, and owning such a large body of land in this, led to the supposition by some that he possessed a large amount of treasure in some shape, if not in coin, and this supposition probably led to his tragic end. He and his wife were murdered in their cabin when all the rest of the household were absent, except one of the men servants, who was drowned in the river trying to escape. The murderers were never known, though strong circumstantial evidence implicated two white men and a negro.

The foregoing is all the history the writer has been able to obtain of Baron Ten Beuf, who was supposed to have come to this country for the purpose of establishing a colony in due time, but whose aspirations and dreams of wealth were blasted in a moment, in the prime of his life, by the hands of assassins and robbers. The writer has been informed by a gentleman who claims to know something of his history as he heard it through tradition, that Ten Beuf borrowed £2,000 from the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of planting a colony, mortgaging

his estate for the payment, and that his lands were sold only a few years ago for the payment of the claim, and are now principally owned by a few gentlemen in Russell. This may or may not be true, but one thing is certain, and that is, when a railroad shall have been made through these lands to Pound Gap, they will be immensely valuable. They rest upon a solid foundation of coal, much of it the best varieties known, and if indications are not deceptive, oil will be found in any quantity.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE NATURAL BRIDGE OF SCOTT.

Among the many Natural Curiosities in Southwestern Virginia—a number of which have been briefly sketched in other chapters of this volume—is the Natural Bridge of Scott county. It is not so perfect a bridge as that of Rockbridge county, but much grander in proportions. It spans a turbulent and rapid little stream bearing the name of Stock Creek, and, like its counter-part of Rockbridge, has a public highway passing over it. It is, by actual measurement, four hundred and twenty feet high—about twice as high as the famed Natural Bridge—and the face of the structure as smooth and perpendicular as if fashioned by the skill of a mason. Leading off for several hundred yards from the lower side of the bridge, the creek is hemmed in by perpendicular walls of a like height, some two hundred yards apart, so shutting out the rays of the sun from the chasm as to give the rapid stream at the bottom an awfully grand appearance. About one hundred feet from the top of one of these walls appears a fissure or cavern, in the face of a rock, which, during the war of 1812, was supposed to contain “Peter dirt,” the substance from which saltpetre is made, an article of considerable traffic among the men of the mountains. But how to get at it was a question that puzzled the heads of the most venturesome, fraught, as it was, with such fearful peril.

A man in the neighborhood by the name of Horton agreed to be let down by a strong rope, carrying with him a long pole with a hook on the end of it, to pull himself in when opposite the cavity. The top of the wall impending, he would of course swing out some distance from the face of the rock. When his companions were about ready to let him down, with a man on the opposite precipice to direct their movements, they found the rope was not quite long enough, and having proceeded thus far, they determined not to relinquish the project, and began to devise ways and means of splicing the rope. It was finally decided to skin a pawpaw tree and twist the bark, which is very strong, and splice the rope with it. They did this, secured Horton in the noose, and let him down. Thus far all worked well, the man was swinging in the right place, and all he had to do was to draw himself in with his pole and hook, being some fifteen feet out from the place he wanted to reach. Accordingly, he fastened his hook in the fissure and drew himself in, but just as he was about to grasp the rock with his hand, his hook let go, and away he went swinging back and forth like a pendulum over that fearful chasm, with three hundred feet below him, and the bottom covered with jagged boulders and a whirling and dashing mountain torrent. It was a fearful ride in mid air, but what added horror to the terrible situation was, that in its vibrations on the sharp edge of the rock one of the strands of the bark rope was severed and began to unwind. Horton himself first discovered it, and directing the attention of his companions to it, they rapidly drew him up, and were fortunate enough to grasp the hemp rope just in time to save the daring adven-

turer. Horton, it is said, was about as near dead as alive when he reached the top, and was no doubt a wiser if not a better man after that, and never again hunted "Peter dirt" in that direction.

In standing upon the opposite cliff and looking down into the deep, dark chasm over which that thoughtless man had swung like the pendulum of a clock, the writer experienced a feeling of awe he cannot describe, but which the reader can readily imagine. The adventure was a fearful as well as a very silly one, and only shows what the weakness of humanity will undertake for the sake of notoriety or the love of gain.

As said in the beginning of this chapter, this superstructure is not so perfect a bridge as that which adorns all our geographies, but it is on a much more stupendous scale. Its imperfections consist in being much wider than long, and the small proportion of arch to the immense mass of rock above it. It is really more of a tunnel than a bridge, although a public road crosses the chasm upon it. The tunnel is not straight, but is in the shape of an S, and from two hundred to three hundred yards in length. The track of the Virginia and Kentucky railroad is located through it, and the arch is far more than sufficient for the passage of a train. Should that road ever be made—and no reasonable man can doubt that it will—the Natural Bridge of Scott county will become a place of public resort, more particularly as there are several large caves in the immediate vicinity, with a great variety of stalactites and stalagmites in all stages of formation—some as hard as the rocks that entomb them, and others as pliant as putty.

CHAPTER XLII.

BRIEF HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA, AND THE FIRST MINISTERS—MEMOIRS OF REV. CHARLES CUMMINGS.

The writer is not aware that he could more profitably or appropriately bring this miscellaneous volume to a close than by giving a brief account of the original organization of Churches in Southwestern Virginia, with the names of the devoted pioneers who planted the banners of the cross among the mountains.

The Presbyterians were probably the first who worshiped in houses erected for the purpose, with regularly appointed pastors, and the Rev. Charles Cummings is the first pastor of whom the writer has any account, but there was probably at least one other before him, as there were two houses of worship with their membership of staunch Scotch-Irish Presbyterians when he came here in 1773. These were Sinking Spring and Ebbing Spring—the first on the highest ground near the centre of the old cemetery at Abingdon, and the other on the site of the present Glade Spring Church, or somewhere near it. These congregations included all the Presbyterians from Mount Airy to the Tennessee line, and they were an intelligent and patriotic people, many of whom fell at the terrible battle of King's Mountain, some of them became distinguished men, and a large number of the best and most thrifty of our present population are their descendants.

For the following brief memoirs of the Rev. Charles Cummings, a number of whose grandchildren still live at and near Abingdon, the writer is indebted to a little pamphlet written by a gentleman who had an intimate personal acquaintance with Mr. Cummings.

Rev. Charles Cummings was an Irishman by birth, and came to America in early manhood. He was evidently not without means, as soon after arriving in this country he entered Carlisle College, Pennsylvania. After receiving a thorough education for the times, he settled in Lancaster county, Virginia, where, on the 13th of February, 1766, he married Miss Milly Carter. He was studying divinity at the time, and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Hanover on the 18th of April, 1767. His first call was to North Mountain Church in Augusta county, where he labored five years.

In 1772, he received a call from the people of Holston, forming the two congregations above spoken of—Sinking and Ebbing Springs. This call he immediately accepted; removed with his family, purchased land in the neighborhood of where Abingdon now stands, and settled upon it, and which is now owned by his grandchildren.

Mr. Cummings was of middle stature, about five feet ten inches high; well set and formed, possessing great personal firmness and dignity of character. His voice was strong, and had great compass; his articulation slow, clear and distinct; without apparent effort, he could speak to be heard by ten thousand people. His mind was good, but not brilliant. He understood his own system well; spoke always with gravity, and required it from all who sat

under the sound of his voice. He would not tolerate any movement among the congregation after the services commenced. He uniformly spoke like one having authority, and laid down the law and the Gospel, as he understood them, with great distinctness.

At this time the Indians were very troublesome, and continued to be so for several years; and generally, during the summer months, the families, for safety, were obliged to collect together in forts. The one to which he always removed his family was Black's Fort, on a knoll on the southside of Abingdon, between the railroad and Captain Findlay's mill, and immediately opposite the gate leading in to the residence of Colonel A. C. Cummings.

In the month of July, 1776, when his family were in the fort, and he, with a servant and wagon, and three neighbors, were going to his farm, the party were attacked by Indians a few hundred yards from the meeting-house. Henry Creswell, who was driving, was killed at the first fire of the Indians; and during the skirmish, the two other neighbors were wounded. Mr. Cummings and his servant man Tobe, both of whom were well armed, drove the Indians from their ambush, and with the aid of some men from the fort—who hearing their firing came to their relief—brought in the dead and wounded.

From the year Mr. Cummings commenced preaching at Sinking Spring, up to about the year 1776, the men never went to church without being armed, and taking their families with them. On Sabbath morning, during this period, it was Mr. Cummings' custom—for he was always a very neat man in his dress—to dress himself,

then put on his shot-pouch, shoulder his rifle, mount his horse, and ride off to church. There he met his gallant and intelligent congregation, each man with his rifle in his hand. When seated in the meeting-house, they presented altogether a most solemn and singular spectacle.

Mr. Cummings' uniform habit, before entering the house, was to take a short walk alone, while the congregation were seating themselves; he would then return, at the door hold a few words of conversation with some one of the elders of the church; then walk gravely through the crowd, mount the steps of the pulpit, deposit his rifle in a corner near him, lay off his shot-pouch, and commence the solemn services of the day. He would preach two sermons, having a short intermission between them, and then dismiss the congregation.

The congregation was very large, and preaching was always well attended. On sacramental occasions, which were generally about twice a year, the table was spread in the grove surrounding the church. Here he preached for many years, and until far advanced in life, to one of the largest, most respectable and most intelligent congregations ever assembled in West Virginia. His congregation at Ebbing Spring was equally respectable and intelligent, but not so large. What portion of his time he devoted to this congregation is not known. It included the families of the Royal Oak (east of where Marion now is) and for twenty miles in that direction.

He was a zealous Whig, and contributed much to kindle the patriotic fire which blazed forth so brilliantly among the people of the Holston in the war of the Revolution.

He was the first named on the list of the Committee of Safety for Fincastle county; and after the formation of Washington county he was chairman of the Committee of Safety for that county, and took an active part in all its measures.

He died in March, 1812, in about the eightieth year of his age, leaving many and most respectable descendants. He was a sincere and exemplary Christian, and a John Knox in his energy and zeal in support of his own particular church. He never lost sight of his object, and always marched directly up to it with a full front. He performed a great deal of missionary labor through an extensive district of country beyond his immediate field, which was of itself large. The fruits of his labors still remain, and he is no doubt reaping a rich reward for his zeal in the cause of his Master.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA, WITH THE NAMES OF THE FIRST MINISTERS OF THAT DENOMINATION.

From the best information the writer can get, the Presbyterians had regularly organized churches in Holston, as this part of the State was then called, several years before the Methodists found their way through the Alleghanies, as the Rev. Mr. Cummings, as shown in the preceding chapter, received a call from two regularly organized congregations in 1772, whereas the first Methodist, of whom any reliable account is given, came about the year 1781.

Mr. McFerrin, in his graphic and interesting work on "Methodism in Tennessee," says: "As early as the year 1785, the first traveling preachers visited the Holston country. Their names were Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert. The country, at this time, was new and thinly settled. They met with many privations and sufferings, and made but little progress. The most of the country through which they traveled was very mountainous and rough, and the people ignorant and uncultivated, and the greater part a frontier exposed to Indian depredations. They were followed by Mark Whitaker and Mark Moore, who were zealous, plain, old-fashioned Methodist preachers, and calculated to make an impression. Their labors were successful, and they were instrumental in raising up many

societies. Mark Whitaker, in particular, was a strong man, and maintained Methodist doctrine in opposition to Calvinism, which was the prevailing doctrine of that time. He laid a good foundation for his successors, and was followed by Jeremiah Matsen and Thomas Ware, and after them in succession Joseph Doddridge, Jeremiah Able, John Tunnell, John Baldwin, Charles Havelly, John McGehee and John West. Under God these men planted the standard of the cross in the frontier settlements, and numerous societies were raised up, so that in 1791 the societies numbered upward of one thousand. * * * *

The pioneers of Methodism in that part of Western Virginia and the Western Territory suffered many privations, and underwent much toil and labor, preaching in forts and cabins, sleeping on straw, bear and buffalo skins, living on bear meat, venison and wild turkeys, traveling over mountains and through solitary valleys, and sometimes lying on the cold ground; receiving but scanty support, barely enough to keep soul and body together, with coarse, home-made apparel; but the best of all was, their labors were owned and blessed of God, and they were like a band of brothers, having one purpose and end in view—the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. When the preachers met from their different and distant fields of labor, they had a feast of love and friendship; and when they parted, they wept and embraced each other. Such was the spirit of primitive Methodist preachers.

The first Conference in Southwestern Virginia was held at Huffaker's, on the 15th of April, 1792. Bishop Asbury presided. "Huffaker's" was on the fine farm now owned

and occupied by Mr. Benjamin K. Buchanan, some three or four miles from the Saltworks, and was pronounced "Half-acre" in the neighborhood at that day. General Russell and his wife are said to have been converted during the meeting, and entertained the preachers at their house, which was at or near the Saltworks.

Barnabas McHenry was one of the first converts in the Holston country, and he lived in Rich Valley, not far from the Saltworks.

As this matter is of interest to the members of the Methodist Church, many of whom have not and never may see Dr. McFerrin's entertaining book, the writer will make one more quotation and dismiss the subject.

"At the Conference held in 1783 (the second ever held), commencing at Ellis' Preaching-house, in Sussex county, Virginia, on the 17th of April, and adjourning to Baltimore on the 21st of May, there was a return made of the Holston Circuit, with sixty members; and with this year the statistical history of Methodism in this part of the country begins. This was only seventeen years after the commonly received date of the organization of the first Methodist society in America, and only ten years after the first Conference, when the whole number of preachers, as previously stated, was only ten. So it will be seen that Methodism in the bounds of the Holston Conference dates back almost as far as in any other portion of the country. But to the mind of the writer, with the evidence before him, there are good reasons to date it back earlier than this, and date its commencement in 1776. * * * * *

If the reader be curious on this subject, and will take the

pains to examine, he will find that, after its introduction to the Holston country, Methodism worked its way northward and eastward in Virginia, and also that the Holston work was connected with that in Carolina immediately east of the mountains, clearly indicating that from thence it found its way to this country almost as soon as to any part of North Carolina.

“At the Conference of 1783, when the Holston Circuit was formed, there were, in the entire connection in America, 13,740 members, and eighty-two preachers were this year stationed. But if the history be commenced in 1776, which the writer believes to be the proper date, there were at that time twenty-four preachers and 4,921 members. So the operations of Methodist preachers, in what is now the bounds of Holston Conference, had an early, if not a fair start.

“Jeremiah Lambert was the first appointee to the Holston Circuit as such. The war of the Revolution being about ended, and the tide of emigration setting strongly in this direction, the number of members in the Church having increased, as well as the population, and this country being separated by high mountains from that on the east, it was deemed best, in laying off the work, to separate it from that with which it had been connected, and assign it to one man. Mr. Lambert's circuit embraced all the settlements on the Watauga, Nolichucky and Holston rivers, including those in what is now Greene, Washington, Carter, Johnson, Sullivan and Hawkins counties, Tennessee, and Washington, Smyth, Russell, and perhaps Lee and Scott counties, Virginia. This circuit he traveled during

the year, but as the country was very sparsely settled, provisions scarce, and the Indians very troublesome, his hardships must have been very great and his sufferings severe—no accommodations, in the modern acceptation of that term, for traveling, lodging, study, or anything else—without pay, without hope of earthly reward, without earthly friends or protection, and often without food or shelter—he made his way, as best he could, in the name and for the sake of Him who had said, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,’ and at the next Conference, or in April, 1784, he returned seventy-six members, or sixteen more than he had received. This good man ended his career on earth a few years after this, and was taken to his reward on high. He was succeeded by Henry Willis, and he by Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert.”

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN THE HOLSTON SETTLEMENTS, AND ITS PIONEER MINISTERS.

The writer is without accurate information as to the exact time of the organization of the first Baptist society in the Holston country, but it is known to have existed before 1776—at least cotemporary with, if not anterior to, the Presbyterian organizations at Sinking and Ebbing Springs, which was certainly as early as 1772.

The first Baptist Church, as far as any reliable information can be had, was at St. Clair's bottom, and as that was about the first "clearing" in the Holston region—an Englishman by the name of St. Clair having been found there in 1764—it is more than probable that it was honored with the first house of worship. It is of record that the ministers, as well as members of that church in its early history, worshiped with their rifles in their hands, and that they were often harrassed by predatory bands of Indians.

The first Baptist ministers in this part of the State were Jonathan Mulkey, Andrew Baker, Edward Kelly, Barnet Reynolds and John Brundridge, and they literally took their lives in their hands "going about doing good." They traveled great distances through a comparative wilderness, facing dangers, seen and unseen, for the purpose of dispensing the blessings of the Gospel among the scattered

settlers ; and all this labor, exposure and danger without the prospect or even hope of earthly reward. They were mostly unlettered men, but not more so, perhaps, than the fishermen who were called from their nets on the sea of Galilee, and thus laid a foundation for their successors to build upon, and upon which has been reared a spiritual temple of magnificent proportions.

Many of the older citizens of this part of the State remember some of the immediate successors of the primitive ministers, among whom were Elders Colley, Jessee, Seuter and Edwards, with all of whom the writer had a pleasant personal acquaintance. They formed the connecting link between the founders of the church in the wilderness and the oldest of the Baptist Ministers of the present day. They were men of exemplary lives, and though rude in speech preached with great power and effect. They were all working men, laboring with their hands for the bread that sustained themselves and families, and dispensing the bread of life to others without money and without price. They were all men of sound, practical sense, and of simple, unadorned, but dignified piety.

Mr. Colley was somewhat eccentric, but a man of great earnestness and fidelity. He was a professor, if not a preacher, at least as early as 1808, as he was called to visit Mr. William King, the founder of the Saltworks, during his last illness, who died in October of that year.

Mr. Jessee would have ranked with the ablest divines of the present day in his familiarity with theology and his natural elocution. The writer was present on one occasion,

many years ago, when Mr. Edwards girded himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet.

These were all grand old men, simple in speech as in garb, and the great Hereafter only can reveal the amount of good they accomplished in their day.

When there was a division in the church some thirty-odd years ago on the subject of Foreign Missions, Mr. Jessee gave the missionary cause his hearty and zealous support, and Mr. Colley was equally as earnest in his opposition. He thought the Church could and would evangelize the world, and had no need of auxiliary societies of any sort. When the matter was discussed at Yellow Spring, where he had ministered for many years, he stood alone in his opposition. When a brother arose and said there was something *radically* wrong in such opposition, Mr. Colley replied "take your seat, my brother, you know nothing about it. We have all heard of Radical* Methodists, but who ever heard of a *radical* Baptist?"

*Alluding to the Methodist Protestant Church, by some called Radical in derision.

CHAPTER XLV.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CANEY VALLEY.

Caney Valley, as it is called by some, and Elk Valley by others, is so little known, even by a large number of persons in Washington county, that the writer hopes a brief description of some of its peculiarities will not be unacceptable to many of the readers of this book.

This Valley, if a succession of depressions and elevations may be so denominated, is a tract of country among the river hills in Washington county, running east and west, parallel with Rich and Poor Valleys, and about midway between them. The hills on each side come down sharply, and while here and there a comparatively level field may be found a few hundred yards wide, in much the larger portion of it the space between the hills is barely wide enough for a wagon-road. Its eastern end is at a point some six or seven miles northeast of Abingdon, and it extends to Livingston's creek, near the line between Washington and Scott counties. A singular peculiarity in it is, that all along its length—some twenty-five or thirty miles—and even where the hills are divided by a mere ravine, the soils on each side are as dissimilar as if they were hundreds of miles apart—the southern side being clay and black loam, exceedingly fertile, adapted to all the grasses, unaffected by drouth, and producing fine crops in the driest season. The soil has a limestone foundation, of a very

smooth and fine texture, but almost worthless for purposes of agriculture or mechanics, neither can it be satisfactorily dressed with a hammer or converted into lime.

The soil on the north side is almost exclusively composed of rich red sand, from four to six feet deep, sufficiently pure and fine to make brick and mortar, resting upon a dark red or brown granite foundation, which works tolerably well, but is much harder than limestone. Several quarries have been opened, from which large numbers of grind-stones have been taken, of fair quality.

In some portions of the Valley large patches of cane are still to be seen, seemingly determined to hold its original right to the soil, regardless of the encroachments of tobacco planters and grazers, as extensive crops of tobacco are now raised there, and hundreds of cattle grazed. The timber is not excelled anywhere in the Southwest, particularly walnut and poplar, and there are many magnificent groves of sugar-trees.

Tradition says that salt is one of the resources of the Valley, which has been found on the land of Rev. Willis Ingle, dee'd, in a morass which was once famous as a deer and buffalo lick. This lick is near a patch of cane which, many years ago, grew as luxuriantly and as thick as a first-rate field of rye. Old settlers relate that a plain, well-beaten trace from this lick to the Saltworks of Washington and Smyth wound along the Valley in the olden time.

On the farm of Mr. Alexander Wood is a red sulphur spring of fine medicinal properties, and on the eastern end of the farm of the late Solomon Fleenor is a field of six or eight acres, where was once an Indian town, many

evidences of which are still visible, such as darts, stone hatchets, great quantities of perriwinkle and the remains of small shell-fish, although there is no stream larger than a spring branch near.

This valley, remote and isolated as it is, was settled by a few persons at an early period of the Holston settlements, as Mr. Solomon Fleenor, who died in 1855, and was a soldier in the war of 1812, lived nearly all his life on the farm where he died, and who, in his younger days, found and preserved many aboriginal relics. He was a good and useful citizen, possessed a large store of information, and took great delight in treasuring up the incidents of the past.

Thirty years ago there was but one wagon in Caney Valley, and not a single public road upon which it could be used. At present, most of farmers have them, with tolerable roads at intervals to get their products to market. A vast improvement has been made in population and enterprise within the last fifteen years, and the farmers sell as much produce and stock as a like number in any other part of the country. The fact is Caney Valley is more densely populated than any other part of the county of like area, and produces more and a finer quality of tobacco than all the balance of the county. Many of the readers of this chapter will remember Kennady Tate, who lived in that part of the Valley where the Russell and Abingdon turnpike crosses it, who paid for the large tract of land upon which he lived and died in Irish potatoes at twenty-five cents per bushel. The soil on one side is specially adapted to the production of root crops, and the

other side to tobacco. It is unexcelled for apples and peaches, which rarely fail.

In one portion of the valley is a cave, from the mouth of which a constant stream of wind issues, strong enough, even when not a breath of air is stirring on the outside, to sway the bushes to and fro. A mile or two off, on the farm of John M. Hamilton, Esq., is an Indian mound of considerable dimensions, from which several skeletons have been exhumed. In some of the brick in Mr. Hamilton's chimneys, the writer is informed, made at or near this mound, teeth and parts of human bones have been found.

The foregoing is a very brief description of Caney Valley, which is almost as much unknown to many of the citizens of the county as the Valley of the Nile, notwithstanding the fertility of the soil, superior water-power, and almost unequaled timber.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HISTORY OF THE WEEPING WILLOW.

In one of the early numbers of Scribner's Magazine, the writer read a very interesting history of this beautiful tree (*Salix Babylonica*), and its introduction on our continent. The article was written by Benson F. Lossing, the celebrated pictorial historian, who says that the willow is a native of Babylon, and was known in no other part of the world till hundreds of years after the captive Jews hung their harps upon it, and refused to sing the songs of Zion in a strange land.

Mr. Lossing, in tracing its history, says that the first willow in England was sent by a gentleman in Egypt to the great English poet, Alexander Pope, two hundred years ago, in this wise: He sent Mr. Pope a box of figs, in which the latter found a green twig that did not belong to the fruit, and being fond of exotics, he planted it in a marshy spot in his garden at Twickenham on the Thames, and in a few years it became a beautiful and flourishing tree.

In 1776, during the American Revolution, a British officer, on his departure to the New World, and supposing the Colonies would soon be conquered and that he would become possessed of a princely estate belonging to some wealthy rebel, plucked a twig from Pope's tree, to plant upon his anticipated estate on this side of the water.

During the war he became acquainted with Mr. John P. Custis, the step-son and Aid of General Washington, who often visited the British headquarters under flag of truce, and a warm friendship grew up between them. At the evacuation of Boston, and finding that his dream of acquiring an estate by conquest in America had been dissipated, the officer presented Mr. Custis with the twig carefully wrapped in a piece of oiled silk. The latter soon after married, and the account says he planted the twig on his estate at *Abingdon*, Virginia. After it grew to some size, he gave General Gates two twigs, who planted them on his estate in New York. Some twenty years after hearing this remarkable history, says Mr. Lossing, he was at Arlington, then the residence of Mr. George W. P. Custis, the son of the gentleman already named, and while conversing with him upon the subject, the old gentleman pointed to a magnificent willow in the yard, and remarked "that is a child of the tree at Abingdon."

The writer, on seeing this in *Scribner's Magazine*, and having no knowledge of any other Abingdon in Virginia besides our own in Washington county, and feeling interested in learning something further upon the subject, entered into a correspondence with Mr. Lossing, in the course of which that gentleman ascertained that the Abingdon spoken of by Mr. Custis was his father's estate on the Potomac above Arlington. This dissipated the fond dream that our Abingdon had been the favored spot for propagating the first willow upon American soil, but it led to an investigation that satisfied him that it was introduced in what was then called the "Holston settlements" soon after

the Revolution, as the following facts will attest: The writer learns from one of the oldest citizens of the county that two willow trees were growing upon the estate of General Tate, at the Broad Ford, six miles above the Saltworks, as far back as 1806, one of them quite large. In 1794, the writer has learned from good authority, David and Michael Shaver each came into possession of a twig—perhaps from the trees at Broad Ford—and planted them at their mother's residence, five miles south of Abingdon, now owned by Mr. David Parks. About the beginning of the present century, Mr. William King, the original owner of the Saltworks, who died in 1808, planted a willow twig in the back yard of his residence at Abingdon, and which was standing there as late as 1836. So, although another Abingdon than our own is entitled to the credit of producing the first Egyptian tree on the American continent, there is very reasonable ground for supposing that Washington county produced the second.



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